Gospel-Fear:

OR

The *Heart Trembling* at the Word of God, evidenceth a Blessed Frame of Spirit.

Delivered in several Sermons from *Isa.* 66. 2. and 2 *Kings* 22. 14.

By JEREMIAH BURROUGHES.

His Mercy is on them that fear him, from Generation, to Generation, Luk. 1. 50.

——*Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. 2. 12.

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TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader.

THese following Sermons are the Labours of that Prince of Preachers, Mr. Jer. Burroughs, who is now a shining Sun in that upper World; but they that are taken out of this Valley of Baca, and carried up by Troops of glorious Angels into the highest Heaven, stand in no need of the praises of Men, having the fruition of the Eternal God; and therefore I shall wheel about to these choice Sermons that are here presented to thine eyes. In the three first, thou wilt find this great and glorious Truth (viz. That a heart trembling at God's Word, is very precious in God's eyes) clearly opened, fully proved, and sweetly and faithfully improved. So as that by a blessing from on high, it may contribute greatly

Chrysost. in his learned Oration compiled upon the death *Philogonius Melanchton* saith of *Pomeranus*, he was the Grammarian of himself, that he was the Logician of *Justus Ionius*, that he was the Orator; but of *Luther*, he was *omnia in omnibus*, all in all *Adam* in vit. *Luth.* p 170. the Application is easie. *Heb.* 6. 10. *Isa.* 62. 6, 7. *Ezek.* 36. 37.

to the Internal and Eternal welfare of thy precious and immortal Soul. Concerning the Word premiſe this with me, viz. *That in theſe ſix following acceptations the Word is taken in the bleſſed Scriptures*, 1. *By the Word is ſometimes meant the whole Scriptures old and New Teſtament.* 2. *By the Word is meant our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *who is the Spirit Life and Soul of the Word*, Joh. 1. 3. *By the Word is ſometimes meant the commands of the Word*, Heb. 1. 4. *By the Word is ſometimes meant the threatnings of God.* 5. *By the Word is ſometimes meant the precious Promiſes* Pſal. 119. 49. Remember the Word unto thy Servant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope. *God is not unrighteous to forget, yet we muſt as his Remembrancers put his Promiſes in ſuit.* 6. *By the Word is ſometimes meant thoſe Holy Prophecies which are ſcattered up and down in the Scriptures*, Jude 14. *The word thus conſidered occaſioned one* Balduſgar *a famous Miniſter in* Germany *to ſay*, veniat, veniat verbum Domini & ſubmittemus illi ſexcenta, ſi nobis eſſent colla. *Let the Word of the Lord come, let it come* (*ſaith he*) *we will*

will submit to it if we had many hundred Necks to put under it. The Design of the worthy Author in this little piece, is to win and work the Reader, to submit to the Word, to be guided by the Word, to prize the Word, to lay up the Word, and to live out the Word in a conversation becoming the Gospel. The Jewish Rabbins were wont to say, that upon every letter of the Law there hangs Mountains of profitable matter. I am sure in the following discourse thou wilt find even Mountains of Heavenly matter, hanging upon all the main particulars that this blessed Author offers to thy serious consideration in this smal Treatise. Here you have Homers Iliads *in a Nutshell, much choice matter in a little Room. It is said of* Cæsar, major fuit cura Cæsari libellorum quam purpuræ. *He had greater care of his Books, than of his Royal Robes; for swimming through the waters to escape his Enemies, he carried his Books in his hand above the Waters, but lost his Robes. But what are* Cæsars *Books to God's Books, or to this little Book that is now put into thy hand. Surely the Word of the Lord is very sweet to all those gracious Souls*

Psal. 119. 10 *Ps.* 119. 103. *Job* 23. 12. *Cant.* 2. 3.

Sacræ Scripturæ tuæ sunt Sanctæ delitiæ meæ, *Augustin.* Dolphins they say love Musick so do gracious Souls love the Musick of the Word

who make Conscience of trembling at it. Luther *said he could not live in Paradise if he might, without the Word,* (at cum Verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere) *but with the Word he could live in Hell it self. The Philosopher gave thanks that he was born in the time of true Philosophy; ah how happy are we that are born in such a time wherein the Lord doth* effundere Spiritum, *pour forth his Spirit, not by drops, as in the time of the Law; but showers down of his Gifts and Graces; as was most evident in the Author of this following Piece, not only the Day-Star, but the Sun of Righteousness was risen upon that people that had once the happiness to sit under the Authors Ministry: neither is it a small part of this Worlds happiness that they are blest with his most excellent Labours to this very day. One cannot say of any Divine thing that 'tis his own properly, till in his heart; I can say of a Bird, or of this, or that, 'tis my own when in my hand: but I cannot say God is mine, till in my heart, or that Christ is mine till in my heart, or that the Spirit is mine till in my heart, or that Grace is mine till in my heart, or that the Word is mine*

till

till in my heart. I have kept thy Word in my heart, that I may not ſin againſt Thee, *ſaith* David: *and therefore, Reader, it highly concerns thee to get that Word into thy heart, that is here preſented to thine eye: ah Chriſtians your hearts are never in ſo good a Frame, ſo ſafe a Frame, ſo ſweet a Frame, ſo happy a Frame, ſo Goſpel a Frame, as when they are in a trembling Frame, and therefore make this little Piece your delightful Companion till your hearts are brought into ſuch a bleſſed Frame, &c.* Pſal. 119. 11.

Obj. *But may not Reprobates and Devils tremble at the Word? did not* Belſhazzar *trembleat the hand-writing? did not* Felix *tremble at the Word Preached by* Paul? *and is it not ſaid that the Devils believe and tremble?* Dan. 5. 5. 6. Acts 24. 24, 25. James 2. 19.

Anſw. *Wicked Men and Devils may tremble at the Judgments denounced in the Word, but they tremble not at the offence committed againſt the Holy Commandements of God, as ſincere Chriſtians do.* Ezra 10. 3. Shecaniah *ſaid,* we have treſpaſſed againſt our God, let us make a Covenant with our God according to the Counſel of my Lord, and of thoſe that tremble at the Com-

manded ents of God. *The Commandements discovering their sin, they tremble who before were hardened in their practice of Marrying with the* Canaanites; *but we hear nothing, we find nothing of this in* Belshazzar, *or* Felix, *or the Devils. But—*

2. *Secondly, I answer, the wicked tremble, but never mend their ways.* Pharaoh *trembles, but never mends.* Saul *trembles, but never mends.* Belshazzar *trembles, but never mends.* Felix *trembles but never mends, and Devils tremble but never mend. But* Paul *trembles and cryes out,* Lord what wilt thou have me to do? *And the Jaylor trembles and cries out;* Sirs what must I do to be saved? *But—*

Acts 9. 4. 5, 6. Acts 16. 29, 30

3. *Thirdly the trembling of the wicked drives them further and further off from God, and off from Duty; as you see in* Saul, *who under his tremblings runs to a Witch; but gracious tremblings draw the Soul nearer and nearer to God, as you see in* Jehoshaphat *who feared and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a Fast throughout all* Judah. *The Saints under all their holy tremblings they follow after God, as the people*

2 Chron. 13. 3.

ple followed after Saul's tremblings. But— 1. Sam. 13. 7.

Fourthly, the Godly tremble and mourn and tremble; their trembling hearts are broken hearts, and their broken hearts are trembling hearts, they look upon sin and tremble, and they look upon sin and mourn, Jer. 25. 13. 17. But if ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in secret places for your Pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore and run down with Tears, &c. *The wicked tremble, but under all their tremblings their hearts are as dry and hard as Rocks, yea, harder than the very Rocks*, Jer. 5. 3. They made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return. *Pharaoh trembled but yet was hardened, the Devils tremble but yet are hardened. If one Penitent tear could purchase Heaven, Hell could not afford that one tear. Repenting tears are precious, they are, saith* Gregory, *the fat of the Sacrifice; and as* Basil *saith, the Medicine of the Soul; and as* Bernard, *the Wine of Angels. But these are only to be found among those choice Souls who make Conscience of trembling at God's Word, and who* 4. Isa. 66. 2. Jer. 9. 1, 2. Psal. 119. 136. Ezek. 3. 7, 8, 9. Jer. 7. 26.

enjoy

enjoy that choice tenderneſs of heart that is in this little Treatiſe drawn to the Life. Verily we cannot meet on this ſide Hell with a worſe temper of Spirit than that which inclines a ſinner to drop counterfeit tears, and to deſpiſe the forbearance of God, and to kick againſt the Bowels of his Goodneſs; as that prophane Arian *did, who was executed at* Harwich *concerning whom* Mr. Greenham *acquainteth us with this ſtrange and prodigious Narration. This Helliſh Heretick ſaith he, (for ſo were the denier of Chriſt's Divinity accounted of in thoſe days, what ever thoughts men have of them now) a little before he was executed, afforded a few whoriſh tears, asking whether he might be ſaved by Chriſt or no? when one told him that if he truly repented he ſhould ſurely not periſh; he breaks out into this ſpeech, nay, if your Chriſt be ſo eaſie to be intreated indeed as you ſay, then I deſie him and care not for him: O horrible Blaſphemy, and deſperate wickedneſs! for a Man to draw himſelf back from Repentance, by that very Cord of Love whereby he ſhould have been drawn to it. But——*

Fifthly, and Laſtly, The hearts of wicked

Rom. 2. 4.

Rom. 2. 4. Mr. *Greenham* in his Treatiſe intituled a ſweet comfort for an afflicted Conſcience on *Prov.* 18. 14.

wicked Men and Devils only tremble upon the account of punishment, and the judgment to come. As a Malefactor trembleth before the Judge, and under the sense of his doom; but a Child of God trembles under the sense of God's goodness and kindness to him, Hosea 3. 7. And shall fear the Lord and his goodness, *or as some sense it, they shall fear the Lord because of his goodness.* The Hebrew *is they shall fear to the Lord* pavebunt ad Dominum, *that is, trembling they shall make haste to him (as frighted Doves do to their Columbaries,* see Hosea 11. 11.) *Look as holy tremblings and gladness are consistent together,* Psal. 2. 11. *and as a holy fear and joy are consistent together, as you see in those good Women who went from Christ's Sepulchre with fear and great joy,* Mat. 28. 8. *a (strange composition of two contrary passions, but frequently found in the best hearts) so a holy love and trembling are consistent together. A Child whose heart is full of love to his Father, when he looks upon him as offended or grieved, he trembles, like that poor Woman* Mark 5. 33. *who fearing that she had offended Christ in her approaching to him,*

Acts 24. 25. *Mat.* 8. 28, 29.

God loves at once familiarity and fear.

him, same trembling, but yet with a heart full of love to Christ. So here when a Child of God fixes one eye upon the Holiness and Justice of God, he trembles: and when at the same time he fixes his other eye upon the Patience, the Goodness, the Graciousness and Readiness of God to forgive as a Father, he loves and joys; but now all the tremblings of the wicked are from apprehensions of Wrath to come, and from a hansel of Hell in their Consciences on this side Hell. These five things I thought to hint at, that the Reader may be the better able to grapple with the same Objection, when he meets with it in this little piece.

The Dew of Heaven hath richly fallen among many, and yet like Gideons *Fleece, they are dry when all the Regions about them are wet: and is it not so with many in these days, who sit under Gospel-droppings, & who have the labours, of many famous men put every day into their hands? and yet how are their Souls like the Mountains of* Gilboa, *upon which there fell neither Dew nor Rain? this is and this must be for a Lamentation. If the Books of the Law chance to fall upon the Ground, the Jews*

Judg 6. 37, 38, 39, 40.

2. Sam. 1. 21.

custom

cuſtom is preſently to proclaim a Faſt; ah Friends, what cauſe have we to Faſt and Mourn, when we ſee the Word preached, Printed, offerred, to fall upon the ground, and to be trampled upon as it is this day by Atheiſts, Papiſts, Socinians, and other vain Perſons &c.? The Jews have a Law which enjoins them to take up any Paper which they ſee lying on the Ground; and the reaſon is, leſt happily the Word of God be written in the Paper and ignorantly trodden under foot: though Chriſtians ought to be free from ſuch ſuperſtitious curioſities, yet they ought to be very careful that the leaſt tittle of the Word, the leaſt Truth revealed in the Word, be not trodden under foot either by themſelves or others: conſidering its excellency and uſefulneſs as a Guide, a Light to lead us through the Wilderneſs of this World to the Heavenly Canaan, Pro. 6. 22. *When thou goeſt it ſhall lead thee, when thou ſleepeſt it ſhall keep thee, when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee. That is (according to the gloſs of the Rabbinical Interpreters) when thou goeſt it ſhall lead thee,* viz. *in thy paſſage through this World, when thou ſleepeſt it ſhall keep*

thee

thee, viz. *when thou lyeſt down in the Grave, and when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee*, viz. *when thou art awakened at the glorious Reſurrection; but that I may not make the porch too large, I ſhall haſten to a Cloſe. There are three ſorts of perſons above all others that I would ſeriouſly recommend this Treatiſe to.*

1. *Firſt, thoſe that do tremble at the Word, and thoſe that have ſoft and tender hearts: for theſe will find choice comforts, ſpecial encouragements, and ſingular ſupports to cheer and bear up their hearts in their greateſt Trials, inward or outward, or in the worſt of times.*

2. *Secondly, Thoſe that are bold ſinners, ſecure ſinners, ſtupid ſinners, inſenſible ſinners: for theſe will find variety of Arguments, to awaken them, to ſtartle them, to ſoften them, and to work them into a trembling Frame, and a tender Frame, with ſingular directions and Counſel how to obtain thoſe ſpiritual Frames which are infinitely more worth than all thoſe Crowns and Kingdoms that Men are this day contending for in Blood.*

3. *Thirdly, Thoſe that are under many fears, and doubts, and diſputes in their own*

own hearts, whether they do tremble at this Word or no, and whether they have a tender Heart or no; for I dare venture to say that such persons will find in this Treatise, those blessed Truths that will (by a blessing from on high) scatter their fears, resolve their doubts, and put a happy issue to all their disputes.

Reader, when thou hast once seriously read over this little Treatise, I can't but judge, that thou wilt readily conclude with me viz. That the two special points here handled, viz. our tremblings at God's Word, & a tender heart are, 1. Two great & weighty points. 2. Two very noble and necessary points, which all should labour to know and understand, who would be blessed here and, happy hereafter. 3. Two seasonable and suitable points to the days and times wherein we live, which abound with all sorts of sins, and which are attended with the sorest of spiritual Judgments, such as blindness, hardness, insensibleness. 4. Two important points, that have singular other points wrapt up in the Womb of them, and that are dependent upon them. 5. Two points that are not every day handled in the Pulpit, nor sent unto the Press.

Reader,

To the Reader.

Reader, the importunity of a worthy Friend, hath prevailed with me to give thee the trouble of reading this Epistle. And now I shall conclude with a few words of Counsel. 1. Let him that casts his eye upon this Book, not borrow it but buy it. 2. Seriously read it. 3. Highly prize it. 4. Earnestly pray over it. 5. Endeavour to have his heart and life made conformable to the matter contained in it. 6. To lay it up among his choicest Treasure: and 7. When he is in the Mount, to remember him who unfeignedly and earnestly desires that this little piece may be highly blest to the Writer, Reader, and Hearer: and so I shall take leave and rest,

Thy real Friend and
Souls Servant,

Thomas Brooks.

Gospel-Fear.

SERMON I.

Novemb. 19. 1643.

Isai. 66. 2.

---*And that trembleth at my Word.*

The scope of the Holy-Ghost, in the beginning of this Chapter, is to take off the hearts of this People from resting in the glorious Temple that they had, and in the outward duties of Worship that they performed. —— The first he doth by these two Arguments, in the beginning of the Chapter; *Thus saith the Lord, The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Foot-stool.* What great matter is it then that I have such a glorious

Temple built for my Honour; I have no need of it, for I have the Heaven for my Throne, and the whole Earth for my Foot-stool: *Where is the House that ye build unto me? and where the place of my Rest?*——

2*ly*; He hath not onely his Throne in Heaven, and the Earth for his Foot-stool, *But all these things have his hands made*; I have made the whole World. You have built the Temple, and you think it a great matter; why, I have made all the World, and could have made a *thousand* Worlds if I would.

And for outward performances, He would take off their hearts from resting in them; He tells them therefore that while they rest in outward Duties and yet live wickedly, it is no more unto Him than the slaying of a Man: He hath *Four* expressions to shew how He doth abominate all outward Services, where there is a wicked Life. First, *He that killeth an Ox, as if he slew a Man.* Secondly, *He that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs neck.* Thirdly, *He that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood.* Fourthly, *He that burneth Incense, as if he blessed an Idol.* These are *four* strong expressions; and I know not any place in all the Book of God, where so we have God so fully, in a few words, expressing his hatred of the Services of wicked men while they live in their Sin. Yea he gives the Reason, *They have chosen their own way.* And while they do so, let them do what they will, they are all abominable in the Eye of God, God will have no regard in respect of their Temple, nor all their Sacrifices. ——What is it then will please Him?—— He tells you in this *Second* Verse, *But to this man will*

will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my word. As if God should say, As for this glorious Temple, and all your Sacrifices, What are all these, so long as you choose your own waies? But is there any poor Soul, any contrite Heart, that is sensible of his own sinfulness? is there any broken-hearted Sinner among you, that trembleth at my Word? this is more than all your Sacrifices that can be offered to me. Here we have *three* Qualifications of one that God will look at and have regard unto: Will you know what I respect, *Him that is poor, of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my Word*: here is one that I look unto, that I delight to dwell with, and that I take pleasure in. *First*, in a poor Spirit, then in a contrite, and in him that trembles at God's Word. It is the *third* that I intend to pitch upon, The trembling at God's Word. Men of the world they live bravely, and have jolly spirits, Mal. 3.15. *And now we call the proud happy*: Your brave, jolly, gallant, proud Spirits, they are the only men in the eyes of the world: But if you would know who is precious in God's eyes, It is the poor, contrite Spirit, that trembles at the Word, such as men do despise; As who are more despised among men than those that are of poor and contrite Spirits, whose hearts shake and tremble at God's Word: The brave and jolly Spirits in the world, they scorn to be troubled at the Word: But, saith God, Is there any one that trembles at my Word? where he sees such great Congregations as these are, he looks through all, to see if he can find any poor Soul that trembles at the Word; here's an object that God hath special regard un-

to. Now God grant many such objects in this Congregation, and at this day, for God doth look among you; O that He might have objects to look upon, that may be delightful in his eyes! And such are those that shall tremble at his Word: So then, the point of *Doctrine* that we are to pitch upon, is this;

Doctr. *That a heart trembling at God's Word, is very precious in God's Eyes.*

To him will I look; It's translated by some, To that *thing* will I look: O that's the thing that I love indeed to look upon, a trembling frame of heart at my Word: All the beautiful objects in the World are not so lovely in the Eye of God, as a heart that trembles at the Word; the Lord accounts nothing in all the world worthy the looking at in comparison of this object: But at this the Lord looks with abundance of delight. He doth not say here, To him will I look that *doth* my Word, that *obeys* my Word, but that *trembles* at my Word. Saith one upon the place, *There's more Godliness many times in the trembling of the Heart, than in the work of the Hand:* For there may be many things that may hinder a true, gracious Heart from doing God's Word. Perhaps the Heart doth entertain the Word in uprightness, and would fain do it; but there may many things come in between the Heart and the Action, that will hinder one that hath a sincere heart from doing it. But so long as there is a *trembling* frame of heart at the Word, this is that that God looks at.

Physicians say, *The trembling of the Heart is a Disease:* but this trembling of Heart is the excellency of the Heart, and the happiness of the Soul where it is. 2 King. 22. 19. *Josiah* was a King, and he did but hear the Word of God read, and presently his Heart falls a trembling, his heart did melt before the Lord. O what a happiness were this for Kingdoms to have their Kings to have such tender hearts! if God would please to give the Great Ones of the World such tender hearts, that upon the Reading or Hearing any thing out of the Word of God, their hearts would fall and tremble in the presence of God, it would be a great Mercy: It doth beseem the greatest in the world to tremble at the Word of God, whenever they hear it.

In the opening of this Point, there are these *Four* things to be done.

The *First* is, To shew you briefly how the Heart is affected when it trembles at God's Word, what it is to have the Heart to tremble at God's Word.

Secondly, What it is that a Gracious Heart doth see in God's Word, that doth make it to tremble.

Thirdly, The difference between the trembling of a gracious Heart, and the trembling that there may possibly be in one that is but an Hypocrite; For we find that *Felix* himself did tremble, and the *Scripture* doth tell us, that the *Devils* do tremble.

4. The Reason why God doth so accept of such a Heart, why it is so acceptable unto God, that He doth so look unto. These are the *four* things

wherein the point is to be presented, and these will make full way unto the *Application*. The Point is a great Point.

For the *First*; The working of the Heart that trembles at God's Word, or to set out unto you the frame of Heart trembling at the Word of God, (I'le pass briefly over that, because the *second* I'le dwell most upon:) If you would have it set out unto you what the manner of frame of Heart is in trembling at the Word.

First, Such a Heart hath high, and honourable, and reverent Thoughts of God's Word, howsoever before it was lightly esteemed; the word of God was no other than other words are, was but as wind that past away: But now the Soul comes to have very high, and honourable, and reverent Thoughts of the Word of God, reverent apprehensions of it, looks upon it with other manner of solemn thoughts than ever before it had: O now I see it to be indeed my very Life.

And *Secondly*, Upon this the Soul doth with all reverence attend, when it is either Read or Preached, howsoever delivered, attends upon, and sets his heart unto it; As *Moses* said unto the People in Deut.32.46. *And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testifie among you this day, which ye shall command your Children to observe to do, all the words of this Law*; why, *For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life:* Before such an one come to hear the Word in an ordinary way, meerly to spend so much time, or to hear what a man could say; But now when God works this gracious frame in the Heart, now the Soul sets it self unto it, as unto its Life, not as a vain thing:

I see my Life is in it, and there is reverent attention unto the Word of God. Fear doth fasten the eye. When one hath a fearful apprehension of a thing, it causes the eye to be fastened upon the thing: So when an *Auditory* comes to have many among it that tremble at God's Word, it fastens the Attention, and their Thoughts are bent unto it in a more solemn way, and they dare not give liberty to themselves, no, not to the wandering of their Thoughts, much less of their Eyes up and down, but they are watching to hear what God hath to say unto them.

Thirdly, When such an one hath heard the Word, it dares not cavil against it; It's true, you may *examine* the word that you hear preached, but *not cavil* against it. Before the Heart is brought to this Trembling frame, it will be ready to rise against the Word, and to entertain *cavils*, and vain Objections against the Word; But now when the Heart is brought to tremble at it, it dares not cavil and object as formerly.

Fourthly, The Heart that trembles at the Word, doth account it a most dreadful Condition to have the Word to make against it; O it looks upon that as the greatest evil that can befal it, that the Word of God shall make against me, that when I come to hear it, I hear it speaking against me, and denouncing Threatnings against me: O this is a restless Condition, how can I eat, drink, or sleep quietly, when the Word of God makes against me?

Fifthly, A Heart that trembles at the Word, doth with all Reverence and Humility receive in every Command of the Word, and submits it self

unto it, dares not resist any part of the Word, neither Commanding part, nor Threatning part, but opens it self for to receive it in. It was a Speech of one, saith he, *O let the Word of the Lord come, and*, saith he, *we will submit if we had* Six hundred *Necks to lay under it.* So a Heart that trembles at the Word dare not resist it, but opens it self to receive in whatsoever the Lord hath to give unto it.

Sixthly, Even the Promises that are in God's Word, it receives them with Trembling: that is, upon apprehension of the Infinite Distance that there is between God and it, and its own infinite unworthiness of the Mercy that is reached out in the Promise: The Heart though it takes hold of it, yet it takes hold of it with Reverence and Fear. Now then, such an Heart as doth in this manner tremble at the Word of God, this is the Heart that is so precious in God's Eye, and that God looks upon.

Ay, but that's the main thing, O what is it, That a gracious Heart doth see in God's Word to make it to tremble at? This being rightly understood, I hope this *Sermon* may help you to sanctifie the Name of God in many *Sermons* afterwards. This is that God doth require of you all, That when He sends his Word among you, that your Hearts should not swell against it; But that you should entertain it with a trembling frame of heart; and O the Honour that would come to God, and advantage to your own Souls, if you did entertain it with a trembling frame of Heart! I'le shew you what Reason a gracious heart hath thus to tremble at God's Word, what he sees in it; For

he

he doth not do it out of weakneſs of Spirit, but the Lord doth diſcover that in his Word unto the Heart, if it cannot do otherwiſe: In *Judg.* 3.20. there *Ehud* comes to *Eglon* the King of *Moab*, (a Heatheniſh King) and he makes that his Preface, *I have a Meſſage from God unto thee*; Mark now how he was taken with that, *And he aroſe out of his Seat*, in reverence unto the Word that was the Word of God: When he did but ſay, He had a Meſſage from God unto him, he ſtood up preſently. You ſhould look upon all the Miniſters of God, that reveal his Truths unto you, with great Reverence: God cannot but take it ill, to ſee every vile perſon that dares not behave himſelf irreverently to his Maſter, yet cares not what Irreverence he ſhews unto the Word of God. In *Jer.* 13.15. *Hear ye, and give ear, be not proud, for the Lord hath ſpoken.* If it be the Word of God, there muſt be no ſwelling of Heart againſt it; It is the greateſt and vileſt Pride of all, for Mens hearts to ſwell againſt the Word. Many of you think there is Pride in Cloaths and Apparel, but the greateſt Pride is in ſwelling againſt the Word: Many of you think you have no Pride in your Hearts; But how have you behaved your ſelves againſt the Word of God that hath come againſt your neareſt Corruptions.

Firſt, It is the Word of God. He ſees *God* in it.

Secondly, Not only ſees that it is Gods, but ſees abundance of the Glory, the Majeſty, the Greatneſs, the Excellency of God that ſhines in his Word; the Lord diſcovers unto this Heart, that there is abundance of Divine Luſtre and Glory that ſhines in the Word that he doth tremble at,

at, and that makes it to tremble; Above all things in the world the Word of God hath the most of the Glory of God in it. Though its true, a Soul for a long time, while it is in darkness, sees nothing of this; But when God's good time is come to work graciously upon the Heart, God opens to this Heart, such a Divine Lustre shining in the Word that it never saw before, which makes the Heart now to stand in awe of it more than ever it did before. In Psal. 138. 2. *For thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name.* Or, as some read it more fully according to the *Ainsworth.* Original, *Thou hast magnified above all thy Name thy Word*; that is, The Name of God is magnified above all things; O the Word of God hath more of God's Name in it, than all the World besides! Take Heaven and Earth, the whole Creation altogether, hath not so much of the Name of God, as the Word of God hath: There is more of God, there is a greater and Diviner Lustre in the Word of God, than there is in Heaven and Earth.

And therefore by the way, You may be convinc'd of a great deal of Ignorance and Darkness that hath been in you all this while, If we believe this truth, That in God's Word there is more Divine Lustre than there is in all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, surely you have been in the dark. I appeal to your Consciences, Have you seen this Divine Lustre now, we know there is much of the Glory of God in all his Works, in the Heavens, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, we behold the Glory of God shining there, and in the Seas, those that go down into the Deeps, they behold

hold the Wonders of the Lord, and in the Earth all Creatures cry unto us to fear the Lord, and to tremble before the Lord. It is an Argument of a ſtout, wretched, vile, hard heart that doth not tremble before the Lord, as He doth appear glorious in his great works; every creature cries out unto us, O will you not fear that God that hath made me! Every Creature doth call, though thou haſt had a deaf ear hitherto, yet it calls, Will you not fear that God that hath made me? Yea, God Himſelf doth wonder, that Man doth not fear Him upon the conſideration of the Glory that doth ſhine in ſome pieces of his work, as in Jer. 5. 22. *Fear ye not me, ſaith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my preſence?* God ſpeaks in a way of admiration, what ſaith God, this a ſtrange thing that Men ſhould have ſuch hard Hearts, *What will you not fear me, which hath placed the Sand for the bound of the Sea, by a perpetual Decree that it cannot paſs it, and though the waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not paſs over it.* God doth but inſtance in this one work of his; O is there any bold deſperate Sinner that will not fear ſuch a God as I am, who doth ſuch a great work as this: and then again in the 24. *ver.* The Lord inſtances in another work of his, God wonders that men ſhould not ſay in their hearts, *O let us fear God that giveth rain!* we ſee that we do depend upon that God that giveth Rain, O therefore let us fear Him: Now God expects that all his Creatures that ſee this his glorious Work, that they ſhould reaſon thus; O what a Glorious God is this, at whoſe Mercy we lie! O let us fear this God!

Well

Well then: If God doth so wonder that men do not fear Him upon the sight of his Glory in these *two* works of his, then much more may God wonder that men do not fear Him in regard of all those Glorious Names of his that appear in his Word: Now a gracious Heart begins to see this that it did not see before, and therefore trembles at his Word.

Thirdly, It sees more; It sees not only a Divine Lustre, but a most dreadful Authority in the Word of God. Not only Greatness, and Luster, and Glory causeth Fear, but Authority; If we should see a Prince in his Greatness, in his Pomp, it causeth some Fear; But when we consider the Authority that He hath over us, this causeth Fear; And therefore in Jerem. 10.6,7. *Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord, thou art great, and thy Name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? For unto thee doth it appertain*, &c. See how Fear is grounded upon Authority. O Lord, Thou hast the Absolute and Supream Authority over all Nations of the World, who would not fear thee. Certainly this is the Reason that the Hearts of Men are so vain and slight before the Word of God, because they do not apprehend the dreadful Authority there; that Authority that hath *Potentates* under it as well as the *poorest* that lives upon the face of the earth; that Authority that is over all Authority; that Authority that is over the Heart, over the Soul: Nothing in the world hath Authority over Mens Consciences but the Word of the Lord, and that hath Authority; it hath Authority to bind Consciences, to awe and terrifie men;

So

So that a gracious Heart sees the great Seal of Heaven stampt upon every Truth in God's Word, and therefore dares not trifle with it as it did before: It comes to the Word either as to a Sovereign to receive Laws, or to a Judg to receive the Sentence of Condemnation: It looks upon the Word as backt with such Authority, that either I must yield unto it, or else it binds my Soul over to Eternal Death, by such Bonds, that all the power of all creatures in Heaven and Earth cannot loose again. When one Souldier doth but hear his Fellow-souldier rebuke him, he doth not much care; But if the General speaks, that hath his Life in his hand, then he trembles: So while People come to hear the Word as from a Minister, one that they look upon as equal with themselves, they do not much regard it: But a gracious Heart, whatsoever the Minister be, yet he looks upon the Word as above him. *Cyprian* calls it, *The Tribunal of the Church*, because from thence Men receive the Sentence of Death upon them. Now when the Soul comes to see this, it cannot but tremble at whatsoever Truths are revealed unto it. That's the *Third* Particular.

But then *Fourthly*, A Gracious Heart trembles at God's Word, because it sees an Infinite Justice in the Word of God, the Justice of God it is very dreadful in it self, that doth threaten an eternal Curse to every Soul that doth not obey it in every thing. In *Deut.* 33. 2. It is called a *Fiery Law*, that's part of God's Law, the fiery Law of God; and we know how the Law was given, with what dreadfulness, as you may see in *Exodus* 19. the Mountain shaked and trembled when the

the Law of God was given: And God expects that the Hearts of Sinners should tremble, when they hear the Law of God at any time.

But you will say, *We are delivered from it, and therefore why should we do so?*

But though we be delivered, yet there is cause to tremble in regard that *once* we were under it, and we deserve to be under it. We read of *Moses* himself, he was a Godly man, he was one in Christ, yet you shall read in *Heb.* 12. 21. The sight was so terrible, that *Moses* (the Servant of God) a Godly man, that had not so much Guilt in him as any of you have, and yet he saith, *I exceedingly fear and quake:* Especially if the Soul doth not understand throughly, that it is thorowly delivered from the guilt of Sin. For the Conscience will tell it, that the Word of God hath it at abundance of advantage: When *Samuel* came to *Bethlehem*, the Elders of the Town trembled at his coming, so in *Ezra* 16. 2. It's said, *The People sat trembling, because of the matter*: They had much guilt in them, and knew that the Word had them at advantage, and therefore they trembled: It concernes all to tremble in some degree or other: And that's the *Fourth* Particular.

Fifthly, A gracious Heart sees the Word of the Lord backt with an Infinite Power, *Eccles.* 8.4. *Where the word of a King is, there is Power*: So where the Word of the Lord is, there is power to make it good. *Mat.* 28. *latter end*, saith Christ there, *All power in Heaven and Earth is given unto me*; What followes, *Go therefore and Preach*; What may we observe from the Connexion? As who should say, Know that all the Power in Hea-

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ven and Earth that is given to me, shall go along with you while you are Preaching my Word, to make good that Word of mine that you preach: So that whensoever you hear any Truth of God preached out of his Word, you must know that all Power in Heaven and Earth is sent forth to assist it and make it good; If it be a Threatning, to make it good that way; If it be a Promise, to make it good that way. In *Isai.*55.11. the Lord saith there, *That his Word should not be a vain thing, it should not return unto him void*, but one way or other, *it shall perform the work that I send it for*: What God's end hath been in sending the Word to you, we may hope it hath been in Mercy; but this one thing it shall accomplish some special end that God hath had among you: In *Ezek.*6.10. saith God, *They shall know that I am the Lord, and that I had not said in vain, that I would do this evil unto them.* God will have every Sinner to know that He is the Lord, and that He saith not in vain; As if God should say, If I be God, then my Word shall prevail, shall take hold upon them, all the Power that I have shall go along with my Word to make it good: Yea we know the *Scripture* tells us in *Mat.* 15. that *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but not one jot, or tittle of God's Word:* By that we may see how God is set upon his Word; He will rather withdraw his Power from with-holding of Heaven and Earth, than withdraw his Power from assisting his Word: Is there but any one little Truth (as you esteem it) that hath come near to your Conscience, and you have had some thoughts; O if this be true, what shall become of me! Look to it, for Heaven and

Earth

Earth shall pass away, rather than the Word shall not be made good; the Lord will rather lose all the world, than lose his Word.

Sixthly, It sees the Lustre of God's Holiness, and being conscious to it self of Impurity, that makes it to tremble: In Psal. 99. 3. *Let them praise thy great and terrible Name, for it is Holy*: The Name of God is great and terrible, and great and terrible in this, *It is Holy*: So in Psal. 111. *Holy and reverend is thy Name*, God's Name is Reverend, because it is Holy. Now the Word of God it is no other than the very Glass of God's Infinite Holiness; and when the Lustre of that appears, O what fear will it strike into their hearts! We read in *Isai.* 6. that when the Prophet did but hear the *Seraphims* crying, *Holy, Holy, Holy*, the Text saith, that even the blessed Prophet himself cried out, *Wo unto me, for I am undone*: when the Glory of God's Holiness was but named, how did the heart of the Prophet shake and tremble. Now if a godly Man doth thus tremble, O how should the Hearts of those that are impure and corrupt tremble at the Word, when they come to see that it is the Glass of the Holiness of the *Infinite God!*

Seventhly, There is another thing which must not be forgotten, and that is; Those Glorious, High, and Divine Mysteries that are revealed in God's Word, that makes a gracious heart tremble. In the Word of God there are wonderful, high, glorious, amazing Mysteries that are revealed, Mysteries to be trembled at. It rather beseems poor Creatures to receive them with trembling, than to seek to search into them by enquiring: O the Mysteries of

of Salvation, they are such that are so infinitely above us, that they cannot but cause *trembling* in the hearts of those that come to understand the glory of them; There's the Mystery of Election, of Redemption, of the *Hypostatical* Union, of the Death of the Son of God, of Justification, Reconciliation, and Adoption, Sanctification, Glorification: they are Mysteries to be trembled at, in respect of the infinite depth, length, height and breadth of them.

Junius that was that famous Divine, whose Works we have as a great Blessing to the Church, he reports of himself, that before his Conversion he was an *Atheist*; But, saith he, upon a time, on a rainy day, I coming home to my House, and seeing a *New-Testament* lying before me, I took it up, and there I met with that First *Chapter* in *John* (which is a Chapter that is as full of Majesty as any) and, saith he, I took the Book and fell a reading, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*, &c. And indeed if you read the *Chapter*, you shall find that *Chapter* goes on with abundance of Majesty: Upon the reading of this, saith he, my Body trembled, and my Soul presently was amazed, and for all the Day I did not know where I was for amazement: I was struck with such horrour and amazement, that I shoke every Joynt of me, and my Heart trembled within me, and I knew not where I was all the day long.

And this was the means of the *Conversion* of that famous Divine, when God did but let out a few beams of the Gospel of his Word, his Heart was

ſtruck with trembling, and it was the means of the Converſion of his Soul. O how often have you read that *Chapter*, and heard other Myſteries of the *Goſpel*, and never were ſo affected! When the Lord hath a purpoſe to do good unto a Soul, the Lord lets out ſomething of the great Myſteries that are revealed in the Word of God.

I have heard of a Godly man, a great Scholar, being in his Study at a time, and very ſerious in the Contemplation of the Glory of God, as it did ſhine in *Arts* and *Sciences*; For indeed ſeveral *Arts* are no other than ſeveral beams of God's Wiſdome, and conſidering of that, he was ſo taken, that he fell upon his Face: Surely now theſe glorious Myſteries are far more dreadful to make us to fall down, and adore, and tremble before the Lord.

It willbe the great work of the Saints and Angels in Heaven to ſtand and admire at thoſe glorious Myſteries of the *Goſpel*. The Soul doth not only tremble at the ſtrictneſs there is in God's Word, but at the dreadful Myſteries that there are contained in the Word of God.

Eighthly, And further, A gracious Heart trembles at the Word, becauſe it finds it very full of efficacy and quickneſs; It is a Word that is as a *two-edged* Sword, very lively whereſoever it comes, in Heb. 4. 12, and ſo on, *For the Word of God is quick and powerful, ſharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joynts and Marrow, and is a diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, &c. The Word of God is lively in Operation,

ration, it doth work the Soul with abundance of quickness one way or other; to Heaven or Hell, and that makes it a Word to be trembled at. It is not with people after the Word comes with Power to them as it was before: In the daies of Ignorance God winks, and therefore you shall find in the very first Commission that Christ gives unto his Apostles *to go and preach: Go you*, saith he, *and Preach the Gospel to every Creature; he that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned.* You see how quick Christ is. If they will come in and believe, they shall be saved, the greatest Sinner of all; go to the wickedest Sinner, if he will come in, he shall be saved; if not, he shall be damned. The Lord deals with abundance of quickness with those that live under the powerful Ministry of the Word: Therefore, when *John Baptist* comes to preach, *Now*, saith he, *is the Ax laid to the root of the Tree*; why now? why not before? why now there is come a *John Baptist* among the People, now they come to have opened to them their Natural Condition, and now do they feel the Word speaking to their very Consciences, and if they submit not now, Now is the Ax laid to the root of the Trees: They must not think to go so long as they did before; perhaps they were old Drunkards, old Swearers, and they escap'd long, but they must not think to escape so long now: And therefore you know the *Apostle* saith, *The Word is either the savour of life unto life, or else the savour of death unto death*, 2 Cor. 2. 16. This seems to have some difficulty in it, and therefore we shall a little open it unto you: He doth not say, That Death comes to one, and Life to another,

other, but the *Savour* of Death, and the *Savour* of Life.

The meaning is this, It is taken from those things that are so full of spirit and efficacy, as the very Savour is enough to work Life or Death. If one should come to see a *Medicine* that the very Savour of it were enough to raise one from Death to Life, we would say it were a very quick thing, it were very full of Spirits; Why, the Word is so full of quickness, that if it be relisht it brings life, the very Savour of it; if not, it is the Savour of death unto death. *Ambrose* upon the Text hath this Phrase, *They receive the Word as the Plague, if they do not obey it*; The Plague, the very savour of it is enough to bring Death: So the Word of God, if it be not obeyed, it turns to be as a Plague to wicked and ungodly men, and the very savour of it doth destroy them. This is to be understood, that when I come to hear the Word, I come to hear that that hath so much quickness in it, that every Sermon I come to hear, I must expect to be nearer Heaven, or nearer Hell: You have come to hear a Sermon and gone away carelesly, making no account of it, nor calling thy self to an account; What, am I nearer Heaven by this Sermon I have heard this day, than I was before? Certainly if thou art not, thou art nearer *hell*.

Ninthly, Further, It trembles at the Word, because it sees that the Word doth cast all men for their Eternal Estate; if you would know how it shall be with you to Eternity, if you would but look into the Word, and attend upon that, you may know it: For the Word hath in it, that that doth cast every Child of Man for Eternity:

Now

Now there is a great deal of Reverence to be given to the Word. If a Prisoner comes to be cast for for his Life, he looks upon those that are in Power with a trembling heart, though he knows himself not to be guilty, and hopes the *Jury* will give a good *Verdict*; but when he looks upon the *Jury*, These are the men that must cast me for my Life, he cannot but tremble: So if you do but understand what the Infinite Consequence of an Eternal Estate is, you cannot but tremble at it: When you take up the Book of God, this is the Book that must cast me for my Eternal Estate, therefore it is a Word to be trembled at.

Tenthly, Yea, and not only so, that it doth cast us here for Eternity, but it is a searching Word, that comes to search and examine us here, that doth search into the Inwards and Secrets of the Heart; it divides between the Marrow and the Bones, and discovers the very inward Thoughts of the Heart. A man that is wounded, if a Chirurgeon comes to search his wound, he looks upon him with a trembling heart.

And many may speak it by their own Experience, O how often have I come to the Word of God, and I have found God's Word searching to my very Heart, and getting to the quick, to my Soul, beyond all the dead flesh; and I have found all things discovered in my Soul before the Lord: And O what shaking falls upon Men for a long time after. In 1 Cor. 14. 25. *And thus are the Secrets of his Heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* It's spoken here of a poor ignorant man, that shall came into a Congrega-

tion, and he looks about and admires what the matter is, but at length he finds that the Secrets of his Heart are made manifest; upon that he falls down with Reverence of God, and worships God, and saith, *Verily God is among this People:* So it is with many a Man and Womans heart, when they come to hear the Word, they come with *carnal* and vain Hearts; but when they have found that the Word comes to ransack them, and gets into them, and grapples with them, and meets with all that inward and secret distemper of their Spirits, they are made to fall down before the Word, and to say, Verily God is in this Word. This will make the Sinner to fall down, and a gracious Heart hath found this effect upon the Word.

11. *Lastly,* A gracious Heart trembles at God's Word, because it sees it is the Word that must be opened, to judg it at the great Day: It doth cast the Soul here, and searches the Inwards of the Soul here, and it will be one of the Books that must be opened at the great Day to judg all flesh; In Joh. 12. 48. *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my Words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judg him in the last Day.* The Words that now you hear shall be called all over again, every Sermon that you have heard, every Truth that God hath caused to come to your Consciences shall be called over again, and shall judg you at the great Day. Now if you look upon the Word as that which shall judg you at the great Day, it cannot but make you to tremble. O now, If a gracious Heart sees so much in the Word of God as hath been opened, surely there is cause enough that it should tremble at the Word

of

of God. We must not condemn those that tremble; You do not, others do, do not wonder: God hath made them to see that which he hath not made you to see; But when the time of God's Love is come to your Souls, you shall see it too.

A word or two of *Application.*

If this be so, O then you might see *First*, How little of the Word of God you have understood all this while! O how little have I seen of all this that hath been opened! but there is some that see, whatsoever you do. Sometimes great *Scholars* do not see this, men of great parts: I but perhaps some poor Servant doth: *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth*, (saith Christ) *that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.* Now if you find that God hath wrought these things upon your hearts, and your hearts tremble at his Word, bless God for it: And this may help thee much in other Fears, that thou dost fear. O we fear malicious Men, what they can do! I but if thou feareſt Gods Word, thou needst fear nothing else. O but I have a great deal of Sinfulness and Wickedness in my Heart, and I find that I do not what God's Word requires; This may help thee with Comfort against all thy weakness, though thou dost not what the Word requires; yet God knows thou hast a heart that obeys his Word in one thing as well as in another: The Lord accepts thy trembling, though thou hast not an ability to perform, *Those that feared the Lord, spake often one to another*: Then there was a Book of Remembrance before

God, and saith God, *I will spare him as a man spareth his only Child that serves him.* Dost thou fear God, now thou hast a Promise, that though thou hast many weaknesses, yet God will spare thee as one spares his only Child that serves him.

Secondly, There are a great many Branches of Consolation.

Certainly, If thou dost tremble at God's Word thou shalt be comforted; though perhaps thou dost not yet find Comfort: yet if the Word of God can make thy Heart to tremble, it will comfort thee, wait for it. There is as much comfort in the Word of God for thy Soul, as there was terrour, and for that look into the *Chapter* where my *Text* is, ver. 2. *I will look to him that trembles.* Well, what shall become of them, v. 5. *Hear the Word of the Lord ye that tremble at his Word:* God comes over it again, because He doth so love it. Are there any poor Creatures whose Conscience can witness, Now the Lord knows, though I have many weaknesses, yet the Lord hath struck the awe and fear of his Word into my Heart: *Your Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.* Why doth he speak of this Comfort, why doth he speak thus, *Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified?* There were some among these people that were very Tender-Conscienced, and dar'd not do such things as others did, & therfore their Brethren did hate them, and their Brethren did cast them out; and not only notorious wicked men, but they said, *Let the Lord be glorified.* O we desire

God's

God's Glory as well as you; They said, let the Lord be glorified, and yet cast out their Brethren: I but the Lord would comfort those that were cast out, which trembled at his Word, and dar'd not yeeld to those things that others did.

Is it not so, my Brethren, at this very day now, There were some would yield to any thing to save their estates, and that they might not be brought to trouble. I but there were others that did tremble at God's Word, and would venture any thing rather than go against the Word of God in any one particular. Now these were cast into Prison, and with this pretence, *Let God be glorified.* Now hear you this, *He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed:* O how hath this been fulfilled.

Those proud persons that were so cruel in their oppression, and cast out their Brethren; yet those that were faithful, they gave up all, and committed their Cause to God: but within a little time how hath God appeared to our Joy, and to their shame. The fulfilling of this one *Scripture* should make us in love with the Word of God: How many of our Fore-fathers that did tremble at God's Word, and did suffer much Persecution, if they were but now alive to see this one thing fulfilled, it would be enough to make them stand amazed, and acknowledg the Goodness of God, and cry out, *O the Word of the Lord is good, the Lord is faithful in all his Promises.*

And whatsoever hereafter should be imposed upon you, if you should have any thing imposed upon you, that the Word of God will not make good, have a care; One that trembles at God's Word dares not do any thing but what God's

Word

Word beats him out in: This will not be enough for you to say hereafter at the great Day of Jesus Christ, Such and such great men did so and so, and they commanded me, or perswaded me, and I followed their Commands or Examples: But now one that trembles at the Word of the Lord will not do so. And surely the Lord hath some Objects in this Congregation that do tremble at the Word; I see it apparently for the present, that serious intention of yours unto the Word of the Lord which is delivered, doth apparently shew it. Well, God looks upon those Families, and those men in a Parish that will give such good Examples, that shall make it appear to others that their hearts are taken with the Authority of the Word of God.

Whensoever you come to hear, do not hear it as the word of men, but as the Word of God. Though it seem to be harsh to you, O it comes for your good; and there is cause you should do so, it is the Word from whence you had your Life, that's the Immortal Seed of the Word by which you are begotten: If your Souls are begotten to God, it was by the Word: I appeal to you, Either you are begotten again, or not? If you be begotten, it is the Word that hath begotten you, and it is that that is the Object of your Faith, for your Souls, and Eternal estate; surely that must needs be reverenced by you.

Again, The Word is that which must be the ground of all your Prayers; whensoever you pray to God, and do not ground your Prayers upon the Word, it is but to little purpose, saith *David*, *Have mercy upon me according to thy Word.*

Again

Again, The Word is that which must be the comfort of you in your Affliction, therefore you had need reverence it now.

Yea, If ever your Souls be saved, it must be the Word that must save you; therefore take heed how you despise it. O it will lie upon your Conscience most dreadfully, both upon your Sick-bed and Death-bed! O fear the Word of God now!

Yea, you will say, We will fear the Word of God; but is every thing that a man speaks the Word of God? If we were sure it were God's Word, then we would yield unto it, but we know one Man is of one Opinion, and another of another.

But to that I answer, When any thing comes in God's Name, do not slightly cast it off, but try it, and examine it: Suppose one should come to you with the Broad-Seal, will you say, I do not know it to be the Broad-seal, therefore I will not yield obedience to it? it may cost you your estates then, yea that which is near and dear unto you: So, that that comes out in the Name of God, do not slightly cast it off, but yield so far unto it as to examine it, search the *Scriptures*, try whether it be according to the Divine Rule yea or no.

I knew a Gentleman that when he came home once from a *Sermon*, saith he, Well, If this be true that this Minister saies, we are in an ill Case; Now wo to that man whose chief comfort lies upon this false ground, that he hopes that which he hears out of the Word is not the Word. O that Man is in a miserable case that hath no other ground for his comfort.

But

But further, you will say, Will you have us take in all that is delivered?

No not so; They are commended in the *Acts* for searching whether those things were so or no which *Paul* delivered unto them: And it is a very good and commendable thing for a people to examine whether that, that is delivered by a Minister, be the Word of God or no.

But you will say, Many of us are poor ignorant People.

I would therefore speak to the most ignorant of all, to tell them, how they may come to know what is the Word of God, and what not.

First, If thou wouldest know, be willing to come with a heart willing to yield to what thou dost know: in Joh. 7. 17. *If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* If there be a heart resigned up to God, to yield obedience, thou shalt know the Doctrine that is delivered, whether it be of God or man; there is a Promise, O make use of it.

Then in the *Second* place, plead this Promise before the Lord, get alone, and cry to God, and entreat the Lord that he would make it known to thee; O go and pray to God, *Lord, I hear such and such things spoken, and methinks they begin to come to my heart, but I am weak and ignorant; Lord if it be thy Word, cause it to come home to my heart.*

Another Rule may be this, You that can read, Search the *Scriptures*, and go to your Neigbours, and come to the Ministers, and labour to know the reason of things that are delivered to you: Thus it should be with the most ignorant men and women,

women, and they cannot make any plea except they do thus, except they come with hearts resigned up to God, and make use of all the means they can to come to understand the Word of God. And when you come to *Sermons* to hear the Word, O labour to keep your hearts in a constant Trembling frame, and the Word that thou dost now tremble at will for ever hereafter comfort thy heart.

SERMON II.

Isai. 66. 2. *And that tremble at my Word.*

May 26. 1644.

I Shall not repeat any thing, but look back to some other things in this great and weighty Point, that doth so nearly concern us.

The Heart that trembles at God's Word, God looks upon with Affectation, it is very lovely in God's Eye.

I but you will say, *The Devils they believe and tremble*, Jam. 2. 19. And herein they go beyond many wretched bold Sinners, of whom we shall speak after in the *Application*. We read likewise of *Felix*, that was a notorious wicked man, that he trembled at the Word, *Acts* 24. 25. *And as he reasoned*, that is, *Paul* reasoned *of Temperance, Righteousness, and Judgment to come*, Felix *trembled*. *Felix* was a Judge sat upon the Bench, and *Paul* a poor Prisoner at the Bar; But Preaching of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come,

come, he makes the Judge tremble upon the Bench. You may see what a Power there is in the Word; and it is observable, in the verse before it is said, *That* Felix *came with his wife* Drusilla, *which was a* Jewess, *he sent for* Paul, *and heard him concerning the Faith in Christ.* It is strange why his Wife is here named.

I find that Interpreters have reference to the *Jewish* Story of those times, which tell us, That this *Drusilla*, *Felix*'s wife, was the wife of another man; and because *Felix* was a great man in Honour, she left her other Husband, and her Religion too, to marry with *Felix*; well now saith the *Text*, *And as he reasoned of Righteousness*, because he was a corrupt Judg, *and Temperance*, because that he was a Whoremaster, and *Drusilla* that was present was a vile, wicked, unclean woman, and therefore he doth reason of *Temperance*, speaks of those things that might come nearest to their Consciences: *And of Judgment to come.* To tell the Judg and his *Delilah* that they must both stand before the Great God to answer one day: As he to answer for his Injustice, so both he and she to answer for that filthiness in which they did live. This shews the boldness of this *Apostle*; Though he were a Prisoner, yet to speak those things as would go to the quick of both those that he should speak unto, and could not but know that he should provoke them both.

It is said of *Felix* that he trembled; we do not read so of his Wife. For indeed that Sex, if they be given up to Uncleanness, they are the more hardened: he is forced to tremble at *Paul*'s Preaching, though a wicked and ungodly man.

You

You will say now, If the Devils tremble, and a *Felix* can tremble, then how is the point made out, That the heart that trembles at God's Word, is so acceptable in God's Eye; O a poor trembling heart may say, I am afraid that all my trembling and fear is but only at the threat of God's Word, I hear of Judgment that is to come, and I fear and tremble at that, and what's that; that's nothing.

Answ. To that I answer, Nothing, yet that's something. For *First*, It is a Sign that the Word hath some power over your hearts more than it had before.

Secondly, It is something. For it is the right setting of Fear upon the right Object: and that's something; but to set it upon the right Object, though there be not a gracious Principle to act it in that manner as it should be upon the Object.

Yea, and *Thirdly*, It is somewhat to tremble so; For it may prevent a great deal of Evil, it may keep you free from many Temptations, even this trembling of thy Heart may strengthen thee against Temptations.

Fourthly, And it is somewhat farther, because it may be a Preparation for more good that God may intend towards them.

Object. I but you will say, *This may be, and yet no more.*

Answ. Ay, but *first* know that there is none that hath Grace can be without this in some measure, Though some that have this, have no Grace, yet there is none hath Grace, but hath this.

Object. You will say, Yes; Some may be brought to Christ, and never have Tremblings.

Answ.

Answ. To that I *Answer*, When the Soul is brought to Christ, wherefore doth the Soul close with Christ; when it believes in him and upon him, is it not that that dreadful breach between God and it may be made up in Christ the Mediator? and is the Soul sensible of this and not tremble? certainly it cannot but tremble: Therefore though it may be where Grace is not, yet where there is Grace this is.

Secondly, Know that this is the temper of Heart (and even thus far thou art gone) that God uses to work in those that He doth intend to work good in at last.

Object. Ay, but you will say, That some may have this, and yet never be saved: They may perish at last, and yet have so far a trembling at God's Word as to be afraid of the Threatnings there.

Answ. To that I *Answer*, Though its true, that there may be some trembling at the Threats in the Word of God, and yet the Soul may miscarry: And not only not for the present have Saving Grace, but it may be never come to have Saving Grace; But yet know, that there is a great deal of difference between the trembling that God will bring unto good, and that that comes to nothing at last.

I shall shew you that, and then come to shew you what a true sanctified trembling at God's Word is.

But *First*, Even the trembling at God's threats: There is a great deal of Difference, If you put but these *four* or *five* things together, that I am now speaking of, you shall see a great deal of Difference

rence between the Fear that comes to nothing, and the Fear that God brings to something at last; Those therefore that have these *five* Notes, put them all together, it is such a trembling as I believe there never can be shewn an example of it, but that it hath come to good at last.

As *First*, When the *Trembling* (though for the present at the Threats of Gods Word, it is the greatest Fear of all, swallowes up all other Fears:) I mean in regard of the greatness of it. There are *two* things that cause greatness of Fear in the Heart.

First, The greatness of an Evil.

Secondly, That this Evil be hard to overcome.

If the Evil be light, the Heart disregards it: Now if it be a great evil, yet if it may easily be avoided, the heart of man will slight it; but put these *two* together, a great Evil and very hard to avoid, now the Heart fears. Now the Soul that is thus brought to trembling, to apprehend the breach between God and it, and the evil of Sin, as the Word discovers it, to be the greatest evil of all; and now hath other manner of thoughts of the difficulty of making up of peace with God then ever formerly it had; the Word doth reveal to it, that it is a thing of infinite difficulty to make up peace with God: and upon this ground it so fears and trembles, as it is above all other Fears and Trembling.

Secondly, (For we must not take any of these Signs alone) It is possest with great Fear so as it justifies God: And here comes in a special difference indeed, for if you take the greatness of it alone, perhaps it may be in some that may perish.

But if you put to it the other, That in this great Fear, when the Soul doth thus tremble at what things the Lord hath revealed to it in his Word, the Soul shall justifie God and his Word in all: Though the Word speaks dreadful things against me, yet just is the Word of God, and righteous is God in his Word: The Soul falls down and justifies God in all that Severity that He doth reveal in his Word against those Sins that this Soul is conscious to it self of: When the Heart comes to this, it indeed comes to be in a hopeful condition. Many there are which are forced to tremble, I but they fret against God, and repine against the Justice of God and of his Word: But when the Lord strikes the Heart with Fear, and causeth the Soul to justifie Him and his Word, now the Soul is in a good way indeed.

Thirdly, This Heart doth not only fear the Threats of God's wrath, but fears the evil of departure from God, and the loss of the Presence of God, the loss of the enjoyment of Communion with God, to be for ever cast out from the Lord, never to see his Face, and to enjoy any good in Him; this the Word reveals, and this the Soul trembles at, as well as at Hell. Many a carnal Heart may tremble when it hears of the threats of Hell and of eternal Fire; but for the Heart to tremble at the apprehensions of God's departing from it, and of its rejection from the Holy and Blessed God: O it's a very good Sign when the Heart trembles at this.

Fourthly, The Heart doth so tremble at the Word of God as nothing can quiet it, nothing can ever satisfie it, but only Reconciliation with God. When

When there is nothing can satisfie the Heart that is struck with this Fear and Trembling, but Reconciliation with God himself, whatsoever God propounds unto it, it can never satisfie it: Some perhaps in time of Sickness may tremble at God's Word, I but if they have health then they are quiet: In Afflictions they tremble, but in Prosperity they are quiet; but the Heart that is struck with the Fear that God intends to bring it to good, will never be quiet with any thing but Reconciliation with God.

Fifthly, This Fear is that that doth not drive the heart from God, nor make it to go out to any shifting courses, nor in Despair to fly from God: But it is a Fear that brings the Heart unto God, that drives it to God powerfully: The Fear and Trembling that causeth Despair in the Heart, or howsoever not to come into God's Presence, that's Fear that some Reprobates have, and may have: But the Fear that drives the Heart to God, the greater that Fear, the more strongly is the Heart driven to God, this is a good Sign that this Fear and trembling is right. So then put these *five* together. That thy Fear is the greatest Fear, that swallows up all other Fears. That thou dost justifie God in this thy Fear. That thou dost fear the departure from God as well as the wrath of God. That nothing can quiet thee but Reconciliation. That this doth not drive thee from God, but drives thee to God. I say, Where can be ever shewn any example of any Soul that did miscarry in this Case? Though I will not say that this very thing is Saving Grace; But I will say, that there is no Example can be shown in *Scripture*,

where this work hath been, but the Lord hath gone further with the Soul. But still we have not shewn you what is the Trembling that is for the present so acceptable in the Eye of God: what is the true sanctified Trembling at the Word of God, that only a gracious Heart hath in him.

To that I shall Answer in these Particulars, and indeed there is much in this point for our Edification, to understand the true sanctified work of Fear in the Heart, when the Soul fears God and his Word.

What the true sanctified Fear of God and his Word is.

First, It is a Fear that the Soul is active in: I beseech you observe it. I mean by that thus, that it is not a forced Fear, a forced Trembling; but the Lord doth go further with the Heart than so. The Soul hath an inward Principle in it that doth act this Fear; I mean thus; The Lord hath caused my Heart to see that in the Word which makes me tremble, and I am glad of it: I am glad that I know the Word, that ever it was revealed to me, and that ever God did make me so apprehensive of it. The Heart now doth act in this, and accounts it a Mercy that this Word that causes it to fear and tremble was revealed to it; it doth not think it an Evil and a Misery, as many people when they hear the Word that makes their hearts to tremble: they look upon it as a Plague to them, they cry out of the Word, and perhaps of the Ministers of it; as those possest once cried out of Christ, *Art thou come to torment us before our time?*

and

and they labour all they can to put off those Thoughts that may work this Fear upon their Hearts; And they think that if they can but get out the Word from their Consciences that the Lord hath been pleased to dart into them by his Ministery, then they are safe. But they vex and fret that they cannot sleep quietly since they heard such a Man, nor eat and drink, nor go about their business quietly, therefore they account it their Bondage and Misery, that their Hearts are so sensible of the Word of God as they are. But it is otherwise with a gracious Heart, the Lord is pleased to cause Fear and trembling in a Heart that is gracious, and this Heart blesseth God that hath made him sensible of his Word, and thinks it as a Favour of God towards him, and therefore labours to maintain this Fear and Trembling within it, and gathers what Arguments it can to maintain this Fear in the Heart: *Unite my heart to the Fear of thy Name*; You know it is the Prayer of *David* and of the Church, Lord thou hast been pleased to begin to cause me to see the Authority and Majesty of thy Word, I am afraid I shall lose this Fear, Lord unite my Heart to the Fear of thy Name, Lord implant this Fear of thine in my Heart; as it was said of *Daniel*, (that place that upon another occasion I made use of) c. 7. *last* ver. *My Cogitations much troubled me, and my Countenance changed in me, but I kept the matter in my heart.* I, this was a Sign of a gracious Heart in this case; though the Case was otherwise than this we are now speaking of, yet it may be useful to us. How few are there in this Congregation (almost in any Congregation) that do thus: It

may be you come to hear what is delivered, and you cannot deny the truth of those things, they are spoken perhaps convincingly to you, and upon that your Cogitations do trouble you, and your very Countenance is changed. Do you keep the matter in your Heart? No. Is it not rather your endeavour to put the matter out of your Heart? I remember I heard once of a very carnal wretched man, that accidentally hearing a Sermon, and the Word came very close to him, saith he, I profess I could not get the Word out of my Conscience for a whole Week together that the man spake. Now a gracious Heart keeps it in its Conscience. Here's the right Trembling, when the Heart is active; it is not a forced work, but the Soul doth gather in those truths.

Secondly, As the Soul is active in it, so the Soul is made active by it: And there is very much in this, An Hypocrite that hath fear upon the hearing of the Word struck into it, such an one is sunk with the fear ordinarily; if he doth not despair, yet he is discouraged, and dull'd with his Fear, and hath no heart to do any thing. But now the Fear of the Godly is such a Fear as doth enlarge their Souls unto God, and makes their Hearts active for God; makes them fit for Duty, and not unfits them for it, as the Fear of the Hypocrite doth; and for that you have a very notable Text in Ezra 9. 3. *And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment, and my mantle, and pluckt off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.*

See how the good Man was troubled, because the Word of the Lord it was disobeyed; The man

man was astonished and extreamly troubled: Then ver. 5. *And at the Evening Sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness, and having rent my Garment and my Mantle, I fell upon my Knees, and spread out my Hands unto the Lord my God*, and now makes a gracious Prayer: So that from thence, here's the Note that is of marvellous Use, That Souls which in a gracious manner are struck with the Fear of God and of his Word, this doth not hinder them in Duty, but doth enlarge them: It enlarges the Heart, and it makes the Heart so much the more active for God; more active than it was before: For those *two* may stand together, Fear and Inlargement. In Jer. 33. 9. *And they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I promise unto it.* But in *Isa.* 60. 5. we have both expressions together, Fear and Enlargement. Now when these *two* are together, when the Heart is struck with the Fear of God, and yet it hath enlargement at the same time, and by it is made active and fit for service, this is a Sign of a gracious Trembling that God doth so accept of: God doth not so much regard the horror that is in Mens Spirits that doth dull men, sink them, and makes them unfit for Service; but that which doth enlarge them and make them fit for Service, that's that which God doth so accept of.

Thirdly, This gracious Trembling at God's Word, it is joyn'd with Love; it is a Fear and yet a Love: a mixture of Fear and Love together: It trembles at the Word, and yet it loves the Word; it will not be taken off from Hearing the Word, though it Tremble at it. It will join side

with the Word if any man speak against it. It is ordinarily among men, that those that are most fear'd are never most loved, they hate those that they fear; but indeed an ingenuous dispostion desires to beloved as well as to be feared. Now an Hypocrite may be brought to fear and tremble at the Word of God, I but he never loves it. *First*, Fear and Love do not join together in them; They fear God's Word, but they hate it, and they wish that there were no such Word of God, and that it were not so strict and holy as it is: And that's as much as to say, that God were not so holy, which is as much as to say, I would there were no God at all: And yet a wicked Heart is so in love with his Lusts, that rather than he should not have his Lusts, he would have no God at all: As we read of *Ahab*, he was brought to tremble, and yet he hated the Word of God, and the Prophet: That place is very famous concerning *Ahab*, in the 1 *Kin.* 22. 8. where we have the Story of *Ahab*, when he was going to *Ramoth Gilead*; *And the King of* Israel *said unto* Jehoshaphat, *there is yet one man* (Michaia, *the Son of* Imlah) *by whom we may enquire of the Lord, but I hate him; for he doth not propheſie good concerning me, but evil: And* Jehoshaphat *said, Let not the King say so.* I name this place, that I might compare it with the temper of *Ahab*'s heart in Chap. 21. Here *Ahab* professeth that there is one Prophet of the Lord, but saith he, I hate him: Now mark in the *latter* end of the *Chap.* when the Prophet came to him to speak the Word of the Lord, he was struck with Fear and Trembling, for the Text saith,

saith, *That when* Ahab *heard those words, that he rent his cloaths, and put sack-cloath upon his flesh, and fasted, and went softly.* Is this the *Ahab*, he that was struck with the Word of God, and put on Sack-cloath, and went softly, shaking and trembling at God's Word; and yet in the next *Chap.* saith, *There is one Prophet of the Lord, but I hate him. Ahab* did tremble before the Prophets of God, and yet hated them: But a gracious Heart trembles at the Word of God, and yet loves it, and he rejoices at it as a good Word in particular unto him. That's a *Third* Proof.

Fourthly, True Fear and Trembling at the Word is that which will settle the Heart, and strengthen the Heart against all other Fears: It will swallow up other Fears that are greater (that's before.) But that it hath a vertue in it to strengthen the Heart, to make it stand out against all other Fears, this is that that is the gracious Trembling at the Word. As now for instance, A Heart that trembles at the Word, though he was afraid then: Yet when it comes to outward Losses and Afflictions in the world, such a Heart is not much afraid there: That place is famous in *Habbak.* 3. there you have a Prophet that had a very Trembling Heart at God's Word when he did hear it; for so you shall find it in Vers. 16. *When I heard, my Belly trembled: my Lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my Bones, and I trembled in my self:* Here you see, *Trembled, quivered, rottenness entered into my bones.* You will say, Surely *Habakkuk* was a very timerous man; but mark, you shall

ſhall find that he was not a timerous Man, he was a Man of a ſtout and ſtrong Spirit, and this Trembling at Gods Word did ſtrengthen his Spirit, and made him ſtout againſt all outward Afflictions in the world, ver. 17. *Although the Figtree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the Vines, the labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no meat, the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stalls:* that is, There ſhall be a dreadful Famine, and all things ſhall be in a dark dreadful condition, now his Heart, that was taken with Fear ſo much before, fears none of theſe things: There's many of you that will not tremble at God's Word, but you will tremble at the fears of any loſs; you will tremble at *Men*, though not at the *Word* of God: But a true, gracious Trembling at God's Word, doth ſtrengthen the Heart againſt other Fears; and ſo it was with *David* in *Pſal.* 119. 161. See how he was ſtrengthened by fearing the Word of God, *Princes have perſecuted me without a cauſe, but my heart ſtandeth in awe of thy Word:* As if he ſhould ſay, This is that which ſhall help me, *Princes* ſet themſelves againſt me, and they perſecute me without cauſe, but my heart ſhall ſtand in awe of thy Word, the Fear that there is of thy Word in my heart, ſhall make me that I will not fear all the Perſecutions of the great Ones in the World. I ſtand in awe of thy Word, as if he ſhould ſay, There are a Company of baſe-hearted, white-liver'd Wretches, that ſeem to be ſtout in other things, but when it comes to the Caſe of Perſecution, they will yield to any thing: But what is it that makes them do ſo? It is becauſe their Hearts were

were never struck with the Fear of God's Word: But I do not much fear: Why? Because I have another Fear in my Heart that strengthens me against that Fear: So that this Trembling at God's Word, it is that which will help the Soul against all other Tremblings.

And therefore by the way, Do not think it is a hard Lesson to teach you to tremble at God's Word: What, doth he bring Fear to us? he brought Peace at *first*; No, It is the way to cure you of all base Fears. If you will never fear man, nor losses, nor any affliction, nor trouble, then fear the Word of God, and tremble at that: The more Fear there is of God's Word, the less fear of any creature in the world: It is the only way to free you from all Fears whatsoever.

Fifthly, Another Note is this, The true gracious Trembling at God's Word, it is joined with Joy: It is joined with *Love* (as before); but *Joy* that's a higher degree. There is in Sanctification of the Heart, a blessed mixture of Love and Joy. As in Curious Works, there is Gold, and Silver, and Pearls together, and all makes it beautiful: So the Grace of Sanctification is an enamel'd work: So Fear and Joy. You know the place in Psal. 2. 11. *Rejoice with trembling:* The Soul trembles at the Word, and yet is glad that there is such a Word of God; and he doth account the Word of God to be the *Inheritance* of the Soul. We have an excellent *Scripture* for that, That though the Word of God be that which strikes trembling, yet the Heart rejoyces in it: In *Deuter.* 33. 2. the Text saith, *From his right hand went a fiery Law:* But mark what follows in Ver. 40. Moses *commanded*

manded us a Law, even the Inheritance of the Congregation of Jacob. What, A *Fiery Law*, and yet an *Inheritance?* Yes, though it hath never so much Severity in it. Mark *ver.* 3. He commanded a fiery Law, and yet *He loved the people:* You must not think neither that a Minister Preaching things that seem to be dreadful to you; whereas they are only against such things, as you should account your enemies: You may not think that He doth not love you; Mark here, God gave a *Fiery Law*, and yet He *loved* them. They shall *sit* with all Meekness, and Quietness, and Humility *at thy Feet, and receive of thy Words*; Though it be a Fiery Law. And then *ver.* 4. Moses *commanded us a Law, even the Inheritance of the Congregation of* Jacob. O though the Law be a fiery Law, yet we account our Inheritance to be in our Law: And therefore those that would altogether take away the Law from us, would take away part of our Inheritance: Therefore Trembling and Joy may go together. And a place, though not so full, yet more express than this we have in Psal. 119. 162. *I rejoice at thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil.* It may be if you should be travelling and meet with some great Booty, you would rejoice at that: Why, a gracious Heart can rejoice at God's Word, as much as any man in the world can that findeth great Spoils: Therefore when we put you upon the Fearing of God's Word, we are not enemies to your Joy. But the truth is, the only way to have true Joy, it is to tremble at the Word of God.

Sixthly, A Gracious Trembling it is an Habitual Trembling: A trembling of Heart that is habitual

bitual in the Heart, not at a sudden only. Many times God strikes some suddain flashes of Terror into the Hearts of Men and Women, but they vanish and come to nothing. But this Trembling at God's Word that the Lord doth so highly esteem of, It is a constant habitual Disposition of Soul; It is not therefore only at some apprehensions of God's displeasure, but let God speak peace to the Soul (I beseech you observe this Note) let God speak never so much peace to this Soul, yet still it doth continue trembling at the Word of God: God's speaking peace to it doth not take away this disposition of Heart: When it hath the most quiet of Conscience, yet then it continues trembling at the Word of God. Many men will tremble at God's Word in time of their Sickness and Affliction; but let them have quiet, and outward peace and ease, then their *trembling* is gone. But a gracious Heart trembles at the Word of God, even when it hath most quiet of Conscience; & it is an excellent Argument of Truth & Peace indeed, if you can find this when your Consciences are most quiet, yet then your hearts do tremble at the Word of God. There is an excellent *Scripture* for this in Dan. 10.11. *And he said unto me, O* Daniel, *a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright:* Here was a message of abundance of Mercy to *Daniel*, and the Lord by an *Angel* professed that *Daniel* was one *greatly beloved*: And the Lord sent his Angel to instruct him in his Will. For mark, *For unto thee am I now sent: And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling:* For all this, though he had this testimony from God at this very time,

That

That he was a man *greatly beloved*, and the *Angel* was sent to tell him, *His Prayer was heard*, and yet notwithstanding he stands trembling, he stands with reverence and fear before the Lord, to attend upon his Word. Thus it will be with a gracious Heart, when there is the greatest testimony of God to it for acceptation, when it hath the most quiet in its Spirit, yet it comes to the Word, and stands trembling before it.

Seventhly, and *Lastly*, It is such a Fear as subdues the Heart to the power of the Word, subdues the Thoughts, the Opinion, the Conscience, the Will, the Affections to the power of the Word: Such a Fear as was struck into the heart of *Paul* at his Conversion in *Act.* 9.6. here's a true trembling, *He trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Whatsoever my Opinions have been heretofore, whatsoever my wales have been heretofore; What Stubbornes and Stoutnes there hath been in my Heart heretofore, Lord no more, no more, thou hast struck my Heart with Fear. When God by his Word shall smite down the Heart of a Man or Woman, and make them thus to tremble as *Saul* here did, and cry out, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* this is a gracious Trembling, and such as the Lord hath a special eye to, and regard of: O such an one that thus trembles at the Word of God, is dear and precious in God's Eye.

Reasons

Reasons why God doth so highly prize a trembling Heart.

But now, Why you will say, Hath the Lord such a special regard to this Trembling Heart?

Why *First*, Because here's a disposition that doth glorifie God's Word. When men come and hear it with slight and vain Spirits, and can perhaps when they go away make jests of it, and speak lightly of it, these do dishonour the Word of God; But when the Lord sees a company of poor Creatures coming to hear his Word, and tremble before it, at the apprehension of those Particulars that I opened to you, now the Lord sees his Word to be honoured, and God loves to put much honour upon his Word Himself; and therefore He loves those that shall put much honour upon his Word likewise. We read in *Isaiah* 42. that He loves to make his Law honourable: At the 21. v. *The Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness sake, He will magnifie his Law, and make it honourable*; Let men make it as despicable as they will, yet God will make it honourable. Why the Lord loves to have his Law magnified and made honourable. I confess by Law is meant all God's Word, not the *Law* in opposition to the *Gospel*: Now as the Lord loves himself to magnifie it, and make it honourable, so He loves to see his Creatures to do it.

And art thou one that trembleth at God's Word? thou dost as it were help God in the great thing that He delights to do. When a company shall glorifie God's Word, as in another case we have

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it in the *Acts*, *They glorified the Word of God*, O the Lord loves that. Now this disposition of heart doth glorifie the Word of God, that is dearer to him than any thing but only his Son: *Heaven and Earth*, saith Christ, *shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of my Word shall pass away.* Now thou that putteſt honour upon God's Word, O thou art acceptable in God's Eye.

Secondly, This puts a great deal of Honour upon God, His Name is much sanctified in this disposition of Heart, here's honour put upon the Wisdom, the Soveraignty, the Majesty, the Authority, the Holiness of the Great God.

Now the truth is, The Lord is more honoured by a Heart trembling at his Word, than by a Heart trembling at any glorious Manifestations of Himself in all his Works: As thus, Suppose the Lord should come and appear from Heaven in Glory, with Thunder, and Ligtning, and Earthquake, and now should appear to you as He will at the great Day of Judgment, and the Heavens departing like a Scroul, and the Firmament melting with fervent Heat; now perhaps all of you would tremble at the Great Day of Judgment. But certainly, My Brethren, for a Soul to tremble at God's Word, doth glorifie God more than the Glory that God shall have by Mens trembling at His glorious Manifestation at the Great Day. Why? Because that is such a manifestation of God as cannot but force it from us. But this Trembling it comes from a gracious sanctified frame that there is in the Heart of a Man; and this God accounts himself more glorified by, than He shall do at that Day; And therefore you

that

that would not tremble at that Day with Horror and Despair, tremble now at God's Word, and you need not fear that at that great Day all those glorious Manifestations of God shall daunt your Hearts with any Horrour: Why? Because God hath had the Glory of his Name by your fearing of him already, more than He should have had by any Horrour that He could strike into you at the Day of Judgment. Saith God, What need I force out my Glory from these poor creatures, by striking Horrour in them by such a glorious Manifestation: For I did but manifest my self to them in my Word, and their Hearts did tremble and gave Glory to me. In *Psal.* 29. the *Psalmist* saith, That *the Voice of the Lord was a Thunder*, and so speaks of the Voice of God most dreadful. God hath a great deal of Glory by Thundering and Lightning, and causing of the mighty Oakes to quake and tremble: In *Joel* 3. 16. *The voice of the Lord shake the Heavens and the Earth.* God when He would manifest his Glory, He manifests it by his powerful Voice: But now God hath more Glory by shaking an Immortal Soul by his Word, than He hath by his shaking of the Heavens and the Earth. 'Tis true, If God did but speak one word, He could shake this Building, and Heaven and Earth: But He should not have so much Glory by shaking these, as He hath by one immortal Soul that doth tremble in that manner as hath been opened to you. O no marvail that God doth look to such an one, when as his Word, yea and Himself is so honoured and glorified by them.

SERM.

SERMON III.

June 2, 1644.

And he that trembleth at my Word,

Isai. 66. 2.

THE Lord hath a special Eye to a Trembling Heart: Why? Because as this Word is honoured, his Name is sanctified, so the Lord sees his Heart to be a broken Heart, a serious Heart, and a teachable Heart, therefore it must needs be accepted of God. It is a broken, an humble Heart: Therefore it is added, *A contrite and broken Heart that trembles at God's Word*, they are put together. Now the Lord takes much delight in a broken Heart, that's the rise indeed of Trembling at the Word of God; and the reason why men do not Fear and Tremble at the Word of God, it is from the Pride of their Hearts, and from the Hardness of their Hearts; But an humble and broken Heart, that being so precious, and the rise of this, this must needs be precious before God.

And

And then it is a serious Heart, and God loves a serious Disposition: When the Creature hath to deal with God, and that in serious things, it had need be serious: God cannot endure a slight and a vain Heart, it is a dreadful Curse of God upon Mens Spirits. But when the Heart begins to be serious, to mind God and his Truths in a serious way, then there is a great deal of hopes of such an one.

And it is very *Teachable*; A Heart that is Trembling at the Word of God, it is Teachable: In *Act.* 13. 16. *Ye that fear God*, saith *Paul*, *give audience*. As if he should say, I know you will regard what is said: There's none fit indeed to hear the Word but such as have the Fear of God upon them, they will be taught: You know the *Scripture* saith, That *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdome:* Then do Men and Women begin to have wise Hearts, when the Fear of God is upon them; Then they begin to understand Gods Word, when their Hearts begin to fear before the Word of God. So long as Men have bold and presumptuous Hearts, they come to the Word, and go away from it, and understand nothing; But when the Heart comes to tremble, then it comes to understand, then it is *teachable*. And therefore before the Lord would instruct *Job*, He first struck him with Fear. In *Prov.* 15. 33. saith the Text, *The Fear of the Lord is the instruction of Wisdome*; Observe it, It is not only as in other Texts, *The beginning of Wisdome*, but the *Instruction of Wisdome*. Noting thereby, That Wisdome will never instruct a Soul that hath not the Fear of the Lord, it begins that way first.

Except the Lord causeth the Heart to fear before Him, it will not be instructed, no not by Wisdom it self; the Fear of the Lord is the Instruction of Wisdome, such a Heart is a teachable Heart. The Jaylor that was rude and rugged before, yet in *Act.* 16. 29. being instructed with Fear, *He came trembling, and fell down before* Paul *and* Silas, *and brought them out, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* Now the Jaylor is in a teachable Disposition when he comes trembling, and saith, *What shall I do to be saved?* When Men ask Questions in a trembling way, now they are in a teachable disposition: O here is a precious frame of Spirit, because it is an argument of a serious Heart, and a teachable Heart.

We proceed now to the *Application.*

First; In the first place, If this be such a gracious Disposition, that God so much regards the Trembling at his Word, hence first we learn, That God doth not judg as Men judg: That is not precious to God that is to Men, and that which is not precious to Men, is precious to God. Men they are altogether for bold Spirits, and jovial and brave Hearts that are full of mettle; But as for those that are trembling and afraid of whatsoever the Word speaks, and are ready to be troubled in Conscience, that are of poor, and broken, and troubled Spirits, they cannot away with such men, they call the proud, happy; but God doth otherwise. But God calls the Trembling Heart the Happy Man, that's the Blessed Heart in God's esteem: The world would despise such a one that

stands

stands shaking and trembling at the Word? It cannot stand with the bravences of the Spirits of the men of the world; But is there any poor Soul that shakes and trembles before God at his Word, *To this man will I look, saith God.* There is no object in Heaven or Earth that pleases me better than such an one that trembles before me. But I must not stand upon that.

Secondly, If this be such a Disposition that God doth so much look at, It should teach the Ministers of God that have to deal with God's Word, when they speak it, to speak it in such a manner, as that it may gain Fear and Trembling, that the Hearts of People may be struck with Fear and Trembling. They must not come to dally and to play with Mens Fancies, nor with their own Wit; But when they come to speak the Word of God in God's Name, they should labour so to speak it, as that the Hearts of their *Auditors* may be struck with Fear and Trembling: For indeed there is such a way of speaking the Word of God, that will bring it with Majesty to the Hearts of the People, to whom we speak, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. saith the *Apostle* there concerning the Ministry of the Word, *My Speech and my Preaching, was not with enticing words of mans Wisdom*; but how, *But in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*: See here *two* sorts of Preaching; Here's the Preaching that is with enticing words of mans wisdom, upon which a Preacher may be commended for a brave Man, a witty Man, a curious Man, and an *hundred* such *Epithets* my be put upon him; But saith *Paul*, *We preach in the demonstration of the Spirit*, and what followes, *and of Power*: So that the Power

of the Word followes upon the Demonstration of the Spirit. When as People apprehend a Minister Preaching only Wit, and his Parts, the Heart of a Man will contemn it; it may commend the Man, but contemn the Word, for it hath no power over the Conscience: But when a Minister of God comes in God's Name, and Preacheth in the Demonstration of the Spirit, then he Preacheth with Power: Such Power as prevails with the Consciences of Men: *The demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.* It is said of Christ in Math. 7. *ult.* That *He did not Preach as the* Scribes *and* Pharisees, *but as one that had Authority.* The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had a flanting way of Preaching, but as one that had Authority, that spoke to the Consciences of men: So the Ministers of Christ ought to speak in the Name of Christ, as being backt with the Authority of Christ, as men that have to deal with mens Consciences, and not with mens Fancies. And certainly it is the best commendations of a Sermon, that the Hearts of People are struck with it. Those that write of *Basil* and *Chrysostome*, those *two* famous Preachers in their time, they tell us of them, That they did not account their honours to be in the *humms* of People, in their *applause*, but in their *crying out*, when men and women shall come and cry, *What shall I do to be saved?* Here's the commendations of a Minister. And Ministers should labour that their Ministery should be such a Ministery, because the Lord hath an high esteem of a Heart that trembles at his Word. There is matter enough in the Word of God to make any Heart to tremble, if it be delivered *as* the Word of God. *What's the chaff*

in the whole? 1 Pet. 4. 11. *If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God.* If any man undertake to speak God's Word, it must be as the Words of God, the Oracles of God. I remember I have read of *Tully*, he spoke so powerfully, that he made *Cæsar's* Book fall out of his hand. And certainly if *Tully* could do so with his Eloquence, there is that Power and Eloquence in the Word of God, as will make the Lusts of men to fall out of their Hearts. *The Weapons of our Warfare are mighty through God, to the casting down of strong holds,* and proud Imaginations that exalt themselves against God and his Truth. There is a Power in God's Word, they are mighty through God, not being *Carnal* according to the Flesh, but *Spiritual*, they come to be able to cast down the proud Imaginations, and to make them to tremble before the Lord. That's the *Second* Use.

Thirdly, From this gracious Disposition of Heart, Trembling at the Word, you may learn the Reason why the Servants of God are so obedient to God's Word, and dare do nothing against it. God hath put into them a Trembling at his Word, they see that in God's Word that others do not. You wonder at some men why they are so strict in their way, why they will rather suffer any thing in the World, than go against any one sentence in the Word. You wonder at it, Why because you do not see so much Majesty and Authority in God's Word, your Hearts have not been struck with Fear and Trembling. But they see such a Majesty and Fear in the Word, that they dare not go against it. They had rather endure any evil in the world, than go against the Word,

they dare not do as you dare. In *Revelation* it is said of some there, That when the Fifth Seal was opened, *I saw under the Altar the Souls of those that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held*: that is, They would rather be slain, than they would go contrary to the Word of God; they would keep themselves close to the Word, whatsoever became of their Lives and of their Estates: I saw the Souls of those, and they were *under the Altar*, they were in God's *protection*: O surely they were such as tremble at the Word of God, and God looks at such Souls, the Soul of such an one shall lie under the Altar, shall be in God's eye. That so tremble as would rather lose Life and All, than do any thing against God's Word. This is the *Third Use*.

Fourthly, The *Fourth* Use is a *Use of Comfort* and Encouragement unto all those that are of such a blessed Disposition as this, that do tremble at the Word, *To him will I look, that trembleth at my Word*. The very Text is full of Marrow, full of Comfort unto such. In Nature they say, That *Tremor Cordis* is a Disease, *The Trembling of the Heart*. But in Divinity it is no Disease, but a very gracious Disposition. And such as have such a blessed Disposition, may have much Comfort from it. The Comfort may flow unto their Souls in these several streams. There are these Six or Seven Streams of Consolation flowing into the Hearts of such as Tremble at God's Word.

1. The *First* is, Surely God hath begun to enlighten thy Soul, in that he hath begun to make thee see His Glory in his Word, this is a great Mercy.

Mercy. There was a time that thou saweſt nothing in the Word of God more than in the word of Man, more than in other things: But hath God begun to ſhew thee his Majeſty and Glory in his Word? O this is a rich Mercy, it is a Sign that God is beginning to do great things for thy Soul.

Secondly, But further, If thou haſt a Heart that *trembles* at the Word; Know that all the Threats that are in God's Word, they have the Glory of them already upon thy Soul, and therefore thou needeſt not to fear any evil of them: Thou needeſt not, I ſay, fear the execution of any Threats that there are in God's Word. Why, becauſe God hath the Glory that He would have from his Threats already in and upon thy Heart. Why is it that the Lord in his Word doth ſo threaten Sinners? It is that He might have Glory, that Sinners might fear before Him; but now if thou doſt fear before Him, and give Glory to Him, God hath his end in his Threats, and therefore they have no further to do with thee. It is a great Comfort to a Soul to know that there's never a Threatning in God's Word that hath to do with me, to bring any Evil upon me; Why, Becauſe they have had their end upon me, though not in execution.

There is a *twofold* end of Threatnings; Either God fetches out Glory to his Name by the Execution: Or *Secondly*, By the Heart Trembling before Him.

Now if God may have his Glory by thy Trembling, He will never deſire his Glory by Execution. When He takes his Glory by Execution, It is

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not that He takes delight to crush under feet the Prisoners of the Earth. Indeed God hath pleasure in his own Glory, He is resolved that He will have Glory to his Name from every Creature. But now God had rather have his Glory from our Souls in an *active* way, than to force out Glory from us in a *passive* way. And therefore if thou hast a Heart to give Glory to Him in an *active* way, thou needest not fear that God will force out his Glory in a *passive* way.

Thirdly, If thou hast a Heart that trembles at the Word, Know that that very Word of Salvation God intends to thee in a special manner: When God doth at any time bring a word of Life and Salvation to any Congregation, God hath a special aim at thy Soul, and doth intend thee in speaking a word of Life and Salvation: For that, take that forenamed *Scripture* in Act. 13. 16. *Men of* Israel, *and ye that fear God give audience*: But mark what he saith in Vers. 26. *Men and Brethren, Children of the stock of* Abraham, *and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this Salvation sent.* Is there a Soul that fears before the Lord, that trembles at his Presence? to that Soul is the Word of Salvation sent. When at any time thou comest to hear in the Ministry of the Word any thing spoken of Life and Salvation, know that God aims at thy Soul in particular: To *thee* is the Word of this Salvation sent.

Fourthly, Certainly if thou *trembleſt* at God's Word, thou ſhalt be comforted. There is as much matter in the Word of God to comfort a Soul, as to make it tremble and fear: And for that I might

give

give you many *Promises* in *Scripture*, take these *three*.

The *First* is in a *verse* or *two* after my Text, that heretofore I have also made use of: *Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word.* You tremble at my Word, Hear it: what must I hear? *Your Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified. But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.* As if he should say, You trembled, so as you dar'd not do as others did, especially in my Worship, you dar'd not venture as they did, and therefore they cast you out; But here's a Promise to such. *The Lord shall appear to your comfort, and they shall be ashamed.* The Lord hath fulfilled this Word many a time.

Another Promise you have in *Prov.* 13 13, *Who so despiseth the Word, shall be destroyed: But he that feareth the Commandment, shall be rewarded*: God will reward you for this. Dost thou come before the Lord with a Heart trembling at his Word? When thou hearest his Word, Dost thou receive it with a trembling Heart? He that feareth the Commandment, he shall be rewarded. It is opposite to the other Threatning.

And a *Third* Promise is that in Isai. 50. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God:* That is, Where is this Soul that hath such a Trembling frame of Heart, that dares not but obey the Voice of God in his Word? It may be there is some such in this place, that sits in Darkness and can see no Light, That hath walked with a Trembling Disposition at God's

God's Word, and is able to appeal to God, and say; Lord, Thou that knoweſt all things, Thou knoweſt that I would not for a world but obey thy Voice, that my Heart doth ſtand in aw of thy Word, and yet perhaps this Soul is in Darkneſs for the preſent, and ſees no Light, at ſuch a Soul the Lord doth look at this day, and ſpeaks, and ſaith, Let ſuch a Soul truſt in the Name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God; for there is Mercy indeed for ſuch a Soul. And that's a *Fourth* Stream of Conſolation to ſuch as do tremble at the Word of God, that this Word of God ſhall certainly comfort them.

Fifthly. Another Stream of Conſolation is this, That this diſpoſition of thy Heart in Trembling at God's Word, it is accepted inſtead of Obedience. Though thou canſt not obey God's Word as thou wouldeſt, yet the Lord will ſpare thee. The Soul that finds many weakneſſes, and not able to obey many Truths of God that it hears revealed in the Word, yet if it trembles at it, Peace be to that Soul: I ſay the Lord accepts of this Trembling Diſpoſition inſtead of Obedience, and indeed rather. The very act of Obedience hath not ſo much in it as this; For an Hypocrite may perform the Act of Obedience, but he hath little of this. In *Mal.* 3. 16. there it appears plainly, that it is ſpoken of ſuch a Diſpoſition as this, for in the 15. Verſ. *And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedneſs are ſet up; yea, they that tempt God, are even delivered.* But in the 16. verſ. *Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before*

before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. Mark how God loves to repeat this, and as it were to roul it under his tongue, as we use to do things that are sweet. He doth not only say *for them*, but *for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name*; *And*, saith the Text, *They shall be mine, in that day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own Son that serveth him.* So that God doth not say, To him will I look that *doth* my Word, but to him that *trembleth* at my Word. Saith a Learned man upon the place, *There's more Godliness in the Trembling of the Heart, than in the work of the Hand:* God accepts of it, and therefore be thou comforted in this.

Sixthly; And then another Stream of Comfort is this, The Lord will reveal himself to this Soul. Of all dispositions in the world, the Lord loves to manifest himself to such an one as this; Though for the present perhaps He doth it not, yet wait upon Him, and the Lord will make known most glorious things to thee, thou shalt know the Mind of God rather than any other. I shall give you a notable Text for this purpose, that they that have Trembling Hearts at God's Word, they come to know the Mind of God sooner than any other men in the world, the Text it is in *Ezra* 10. 3. *Now therefore, let us make a Covenant with our God, to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the Commandment of our God.* Come, saith he, let us go and do. How? *According to the Counsel of my Lord, and according to the Counsel of those that tremble at the Commandment of our God.*

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As if he should say, Certainly they know God's Mind, let's follow their Counsel, let's follow their Advice. Those that do come before God, and tremble at his Word, they are the Men and Women that understand the Nature of God more than any other. He doth not say, Come let us do according to the Counsel of my Lord, and of the *wise*, and *learned*, and *understanding* men among us; but of those that *tremble* at his Word, they know the Mind of God.

And indeed, my Brethren, it is better taking counsel of them that tremble at God's Word, than of any men in the world besides. Learned men that have bold Spirits, and are licentious and wicked, they do not understand the Secrets of God so as those that tremble at the Word; there is a gracious Promise to this effect in Psal. 25. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant*; Those shall understand God's Secrets. Other men may understand some outward things of God; but for the Secrets of God, and the Covenant of God, onely those that fear the Lord have the Promise of this.

Seventhly, Such as Fear and Tremble at God's Word may be comforted. Why? Because the Word that thou now trembleſt at, is the Word that God will cause all the World to tremble at one Day. God will honour this his Word before Men and Angels: and consider, O what inconceivable Joy must that needs be to the heart of a man or woman, when God shall come to magnifie his Word before all the World; to think this is the very Word that I saw the dreadful Authority of God

in before, when I lived in the world; This is the Word that I saw so much in before, and that I obeyed and honoured, and now God is come to make it good before Men and Angels, and now I see those that did not regard it, stand trembling indeed, when it will do them no good. O therefore blessed be God, that while I lived, I did tremble at the Word, that the Lord is now come to make so glorious before Men and Angels.

Be you sure that there is a time coming that the Lord will make his Word honourable before all the World: And therefore happy are those that tremble at it now in reverencing of it; Surely their Hearts will be fill'd with Comfort, when God shall come and honour it before all the World.

5. Again *Fifthly*. If this be such a Disposition that the Lord doth so look at; You must give me leave, my Brethren, to speak a word of Rebuke unto those that are far from such a Disposition of Heart as this is. God indeed looks to him that trembles at the Word, But where hath God objects to behold? God now looks at this great Congregation at this time, to see where there is one that trembles at his Word. But, O Lord, though we hope that God hath some objects that He doth behold, yet over how many Souls sometimes doth He look before He can see any such object. O no, It is the Word that the Angels desire to pry into; It is the Word that there are many *thousand* Souls in Heaven blessing the Name of God that ever they knew it, and yet thou dost not mind it, as if it were nothing worth.

A *second* sort are farther off than these, and they are such as take liberty to cavil against the Word,

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as if the Word were their equal. It is enough that you may wrangle together when you are among your equals; but know, though the man that speaks it may be your equal, yet the Word of God is above you. In *Jam.* 4. *If thou judg the Law: thou art not a doer of the Law, but a Judg.* These men come not to be Doers of the Law, but to be Judges of the Law.

Certainly, If God did but humble the Hearts of Men, they would not have so many Objections against the Truths of God that are delivered. But look how God charges them in his Word, they will be ready to charge their own Hearts: There is a notable *Scripture* for this, if you compare it with another; The *first* is in Job 38. 2. *Who is this that darkeneth Counsel by words without knowledg*: Here God speaks to *Job*, whose Heart was not thorowly humbled. Mark now when God had humbled him, in Chap. 42. 3. *Who is he that hideth Counsel without knowledg.* O, as if *Job* should say, Who is the man? Why I am he. He speaks in a way of charging of himself, as God before did. And that's a Sign that the Heart is humbled, when the Objections against the Word do vanish: and when the Heart is ready to charge upon it self, what the Word charged.

Thirdly, Those are to be rebuked that go on in a constant way of Disobedience against the Word of God, in a way of Rebellion against the Word. Thou knowest that thy waies are against that that thou hearest in the Word, and yet thou goest on, and dost continue. O bold Heart, I say, that dareth presume to go on in those waies that thou knowest are against the Word of God. Why, what

dost

dost thou expect to receive no good from God's Word? Dost thou not fear any evil that there is threatned in God's Word? Is it nothing to venture the loss of all the good revealed there? And art thou willing, or wilt thou dare to lie under all the Evil that is threatned there? Is it not the Word that must save thy Soul if ever thou beest saved? I put this to you: Any of you that go on in a bold way of Sin against what you hear revealed in the Word; I put this one *Question*, and it is a daunting *Question* to such an one, Whether dost thou expect to be saved by God's Word, yea or no? *Receive with meekness the ingrafted Word that is able to save your Souls.* Now canst thou think to be saved by that Word, that thou goe st on in a constant Rebellion against? O this is the Pride of thy heart that thou dost venture. Consider of that *Scripture* in Jerem. 13. 15. *Hear ye, and give ear, be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken.* So I say to such as go on in a constant way of Rebellion against the Word, *Hear ye, and give ear*; Do not only *Hear* and let pass away: *Be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken.* When as you hear, and will not regard what is said, but go on in a way of Rebellion against the Truth that you hear revealed, it is a Sign that your Hearts are proud: It is the Lord that hath spoken, and therefore it is fit for the Creature to yield and submit.

Fourthly, There are others that do not only go on contrary to the Word, but they do live under the very condemning Sentence of God's Word: They come and hear God's Word condemning of them for their Sin, yea and their Consciences tell them that they are the Sins that they are guilty of

that God's Word doth condemn Sinners for, yet they can sit senseless, and stupid, and and hard-hearted notwithstanding, this is not to tremble at God's Word: Certainly it is more, for it is more for one Sentence of God's Word to condemn a Sinner, than if all the Angels in Heaven, and Men upon the Earth, should pronounce a Sentence of Condemnation; and yet some of you can sit day after day under the condemning Sentences of God's Word, so as if God's Word be true, thou art a condemned Soul for the present.

I make no Question but there are many that come to hear the Word, that conclude thus with their own hearts; If this be true that is spoken, I am in a woful case, I am condemned if that be true.

I remember I knew a man once, that being wild and naught with another, and yet came together to hear Sermons, he would go home and say to the other Party, *Madam, If this be true that the Minister speaks, you and I are in an ill condition.* So certainly, many man saith, If it be true, I am a most miserable man. I would put this to you, one by one throughout this Congregation, I put the Question now; Suppose all the Threats that are in God's Word be true, and be the Word of God indeed, and suppose that they must all be made good, What wouldest thou think of thy condition then? I make no question but many a mans Conscience would answer, Certainly my Condition would no way be rested in if this be so; But I hope things will not prove so bad.

Well then, It comes to this issue, That all the Foundation of thy Peace, and present Rest and Comfort

Comfort depends upon this, That thou *hopest* things will not prove so bad as they are revealed in the word. Is not this the rest and Comfort of thy Soul.

And in case thou wert sure they would prove so bad thou wouldest say thy self, I will never go on in my wicked course any more, I should never be able to sleep on night quietly: so that then if those things were true, Thou couldest not sleep: now then say I, cursed be that peace, that comfort, that sleep, that case that hath no other ground for it, but to hope God's Word is not true, I but this is all the Foundation of the Comforts of many a Mans Soul, that he lives upon all the daies of his Life: I am afraid if God should call out Men, and inquire of them what is the Foundation of all your Lives, you must be forced to say, it is Lord, out of hopes that things are not so bad as Ministers preach out of the Word: now cursed I say be that hope that is Grounded upon no other ground, look to thy self, thou hast a bold heart that darest venture thy Soul and Eternal Estate upon such a hope as this is, that if God's Word prove true thou art a lost and undon creature to all Eternity, thou darest venture! It is a bold venture: Oh consider of this you that can sit under the condemning power of God's Word, and yet not have your hearts struck with all, O learn this to tremble at it.

Fifthly, There is yet another sort of People that are to be rebukt from this point; and that is, those men that have their Hearts rise against God's Word, (they do not tremble at it) that is, such as when the Word of God comes home to their

Consciences and strikes Fear: It is all their desire and endeavour to get it cut out of their hearts again, and they could wish they had not been at the Sermon; O they are troubled at it, and get into wicked company that so they may get out the Fear of God's Word; these are far from trembling. O poor creature that thou art, how much better were it for thee to follow on that Work of God that may be for the good of thy Soul; hereafter it may be thou wilt see cause to curse thy self for thy folly: O thou wilt have cause to say, what a happy thing had it been for me if I had followed on that work of God, that God began to work upon me at such a time.

Sixthly, Again, There are another sort that rage at the Word of God, as we read of that Wicked King *Jehoiakim* in the 36. of *Jeremiah*: when the Roul was brought unto him, and read before him, he cut it with a Pen-Knife, and cast it into the fire. As once I knew one reading the Scripture against Adultery, he took it and tore out the leaves: But mark, this *Kings* Fathers Heart did melt at the Reading of the Word, and his Son took a Pen-Knife and cut it, and threw it into the Fire: Now this was so great an evil, that I have read that the *Jews* did keep a Fast once a year to bewail this Sin of their King.

Seventhly, Again, How far are they from trembling at God's Word, that scorn at it: As when Christ himself preached against Covetousness, in the 16 of *Luke*, those that were covetous derided him: and so as to *Isa.* and *Paul* I might show in divers Scriptures, the contempt and scorn that the

People

People did cast upon the word delivered by them; but I will not insist there, because I will not inlarge my self. O this is likewise a most dreadful evil for any to be guilty of such a hight of Impiety; whenas the Lord expects trembling at his Word, that they should scorn it:

Eighthly, And another sort there is though not altogether so bad, they will make jests at God's Word, but take heed my Brethren of meddling with Scripture by way of jests. There are two things that Wise Men should never jest at: neither against them that are in Misery, nor Holy things. Now when thou hast to do with God's Word, and makest jeasts out of Scripture: thou dost meddle with edge-tools: and know that it is a high degree of taking God's Name in vain, for any Man to make a jest out of Scripture. I remember *Luther* hath such a Speech, if a Man would play and jest, let him jest with his Children, with his Boyes, but saith he, as soon as he comes to hear the Word, see that thou dost obey without any dispute at all; jest with other things but not with that: and so in another place saith he; it is no play to hear God's Word, but saith he, when the Word comes to touch the Soul, it is as thunder which doth cast down the strongest things by its power: it is no matter of jesting to hear the Word, but matter of trembling? Why who art thou that either thou dost slight the Word, or object against the Word, or rebel'st against it, or wrangle'st at it? who art thou that dost dark knowledge thus? what art thou that canst raise thy Heart against the Blessed Word of God? the

Word of the Lord shakes the Heavens, and the Earth, *Psa.* 104. 32. God doth but *look* upon the Earth and that trembles, but God *speaks* to thee and thou wilt not tremble, and in the 26 *Job* 11. *The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof*; mark the Text, If God do but reprove, the Pillars of Heaven are astonished at God's reproof, how often hath God reproved thee out of his Word, and thou hast not trembled! God reproves thee for thy *Sabbath*-breaking, for thy Swearing, for thy Company-keeping, for the neglect of his Worship in thy Family, God reproves thee for thy *Atheism*: And in the 9. of *Job* the 6. *Which shakes the Earth out of her place*, and the *Pillars thereof tremble*. The Pillars of Earth, and the Pillars of Heaven tremble, and who art thou that canst stand before the Word of God. —— I, and holy Men they tremble when they hear the Word, *Jer.* 23. 4. *My heart within me is broken because of the Prophets, all my bones shake: I am like a Drunken Man* (*and like a Man whom Wine hath overcome*) *because of the Lord, and because of the Words of his Holiness*. The Saints they tremble as *Habbak.* 3. 16. *When I heard* (saith he) *my belly trembled, and my Lips quivered at the Voice*. Yea the very Angels in Heaven they attend with Reverence to the word of the Lord *Psa.* 103. 20. *They do God's Commandments, hearkning to the voice of his word*: that is, with reverence and respect to God's Word, and as soon as ever they hear God's Word, they presently obey it: what art thou all this while? when God speaks, the Pillars of the Earth and of Heaven tremble:

tremble: the Saints of God tremble, the Holy Prophets tremble. The very Angels hear God's Word with reverence, and thou all this while standest before God's Word without a heart trembling: Let me speak but these *two* or *three* things to thee.

First, Know that the Lord cannot but with Judgment *look* upon such an object as this is, the Lord *looks* from Heaven upon him that trembles at his Word with acceptation; but it is impossible for thee to confine, but that the Lord should *look* upon such a hard stony heart as thine is with detestation: what for a poor vile wretch that the least word of my mouth would have sent him down to the bottomless pit, when I speak he regards it not. O it is impossible that the Lord should *look* upon thee without destruction: and especially if thou art full of base fears. If thy Master speaks, or a Man in place and office speaks, thou art ready to fear them, but when the infinite Eternal dreadful God speaks thou dost not fear: know that the word that thou dost not fear, it is working thy destruction: and know that God will Work fear out of thy heart, and thou shalt tremble one day, as in *Isa.* 51. 17. *Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.* There is a time that God hath for sinners that will not tremble at his Word, for to cause them to drink the dregs of the cup of trembling, O the dregs of it may be thy portion.

And further, when God shall force trembling, it may be God will as little regard thee in thy fears, as thou dost regard him in his Word. That

place in the *Prov.* 1 is most dreadful; I will laugh at *your calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh.*

I shall conclude all with a word of exhortation, let us all learn then to labour for such a blessed disposition of heart; in *Hos.* 13. 1. 5. *When Ephraim spake trembling*: this is spoken to the Honour of *Ephraim* according to some Interpretations: that when *Ephraim* did but speak all the People round about him trembled.

Surely it must needs be to the Honour of the great God that, when he speaks all the People should tremble, the voice of the Lord it is full of *Majesty*, and the voice of the Lord is Glorious, and therefore it beseems us all to tremble before him: Let us lay upon our hearts the meditation of how much there is in the word, and consider of the Majesty of God that is there.

And consider thus, how God hath made his word good from time to time: the Word of God hath overwhelmed many *thousand thousand* Souls, and cast them upon their backs, and now they are undone for ever by the power of God's word, and therefore it is fit that I should tremble.

And intreat God, that he would shew unto thy Soul the Glory of his Name, that is in his Word: In *Deut.* the Lord speaks it as a curse that he will give unto the People, a trembling heart, but do thou intreat it of God as a blessing.

And do you manifest that God hath put this disposition into your hearts, by reverent attention, as we see fear doth fasten the Eye: So if Men and Womens Hearts did tremble at the Word; they would not sleep at it, but they would attend: O that

that the Lord would but go on, and keep your hearts in aw of his Word.

You will say indeed, if it were spoken by himself from Heaven then we would; but as it is we cannot.

Divers things I should have spoke about that: onely remember that which Christ saies, he which despises you despises me: and he which despises me despises him that sent me, onely that one Scripture I will give you to take away that objection that it may never more prevail, 2 Chro. cha. last ver. 12. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before* Jeremiah *the Prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord.* The Lord charges *Zedekiah* that he did evil before the Lord, and humbled not himself before *Jeremiah* the Prophet: Why, *Jeremiah* was a poor mean Man, what was he to *Zedekiah* the King? I but yet he humbled not himself before *Jeremiah* the Prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord. Therefore do not say if God should speak from Heaven then we would tremble; But if we speak according to God's Word, God expects that you should humble your Souls before the great God in the Ministry of his Word that we do bring unto you.

And therefore, as you do shew by attending, that you begin to see some Authority, so shew it by obeying, by Reforming of your lives and Conversations, that it may appear by your Reformation that surely the Lord hath begun to cause the authority of his Word to be wrought in your hearts.

Do ye thus tremble before it, that so the Word being Honoured, by it your Souls may be comforted and Everlastingly Sav'd.

SER-

SERMON I.

June 9. 1644.

2 Kings 22.19. *Because thine heart was tender,* (or did melt) *and thou hast humbled thy self before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy cloathes, and wept before me: I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.*

Here are two Gracious Dispositions of the Soul, whereby the Name of God is Sanctified in the hearing of his Word. —— *First* a Trembling Heart. *Secondly*, a Melting Heart. The first we finished the last Day, and have chosen this Text to handle the Second.

The Words read unto you are a part of that Famous Story that shews us how *Josiah* a Gracious Godly King was affected with hearing God's Word,

Word, how he was moved at the hearing of God's Displeasure, partly against himself, and partly against the People. The Sum of the Story is this; In the *Eighteenth* Year of his Reign, there was a great deal of care for repairing of the Temple of the Lord; and in the repairing of the Temple, there was found the Book of the Law, which it seems they had not had the sight of for a long time. It was read in the presence of *Josiah* the King; Upon the hearing of the Book read, his Heart presently melted, and he began to be very much troubled, so as he could not be satisfied till he knew further of the Mind of God concerning what was read in that Book. He sends to *Huldah* the Prophetess to know God's Mind: This *Huldah* sends him an Answer that concerns partly the People, and partly the King. And the words read unto you, they are the special part of the Answer of God concerning the King; *Because thine Heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thy self*, &c. Therefore I have heard thee, saith the Lord, and thou shalt die in peace. Now in this Story there are these *Four Queries* that are very useful for the opening of it.

The *First* is, What this same Book of the Law was, that was read unto *Josiah*?

Secondly, How it came to pass that he sends to *Huldah* rather than to *Jeremiah* the Prophet, for he was in those times?

Thirdly, The reason of the severe Answer the Lord made by her against the People, notwithstanding they were in a hopeful way of Reformation, yet God professes that Evil should be brought upon them.

And

And then *Fourthly*. How that was fulfilled that God did promise to *Josiah* that he should die in peace, as in the latter end of the *Chapter*, which if you read afterwards in the Story, you shall find that *Josiah* died in War. I shall only speak to these *Four* things to give a little light to the History, and then we come to the words read.

First, For the Book that here was found, the Text saith plainly, That it was the Book of the Law: It is strange that they should not have the Book of the Law, that the Book of the Law should be kept from the People of the *Jews*, and that they should not have it now, it were a very strange thing. It is one of the strangest Passages that we read of in the *Scripture*, that it should be accounted such a wonderful thing in *Josiah*'s time to find the Book of the Law. There is a great deal of do among Interpreters about this; Some say it was burnt in *Ahaz* time, he burnt all the Copies he could find, because they might not be testimonies against him for his departing from the true Religion, as it hath been the way of wicked Princes to burn *Scriptures*; *Diocletian* he sought to burn all that he could of *Scripture*. But yet God hath miraculously preserved the *Scripture* to this day. There was never any Book had so much opposition, and that was sought to be utterly obliterate and destroyed, as this Book of the *Scriptures*, and yet God hath preserved this Book above all Books, for it is the ancientest Book in the World. It was long before any Book that ever was written, that we have extant in the world, and yet none more opposed; which is a good Argument that God doth own it.

But

But it cannot be imagined that in *Ahaz* daies the Copy was burnt, and that they should not have it, because between these *two* Reigns, there was that gracious Reign of *Hezekiah*; So that it seems that it may be in *Ahaz* time, many of the Copies were burnt, so they had but a few in *Hezekiah*'s time. Then comes *Manasses* after *Hezekiah*, which was a wicked Prince, and he reigned *Fifty five* years, and it is like that almost all his time he continued in Wickedness, and set himself against God and all Godliness; and then his Son *Ammon* he comes after, and he was for his time as wicked as he: So that in these *two* wicked Kings Reigns, it is like that there were very few Books of the Law to be found.

Chrysostome in his Sermon upon *Mat.* and the *Cor.* he thinks it was only the Book of *Deuteron.* And so many I find, that think it was some part of the Law at least that was not extant at that time, and specially it is thought to be the 27, and 28 *Chapters* of *Deuteronomy* that were read before *Josiah* at this time, that did so move his Heart.

Now by the way we may learn what cause we have to bless God, that we have not only the Book of the *Law*, but the Book of the *Gospel*, and the *Prophets*; Not only most, but all the *History* of the Kings, and Judges, and the *Psalms*, and the Prophets, and *Gospel*, and *Epistles*, and *Revelation*, we have all these Books in our Houses that we may read continually. It seems in *Josiah*'s time it was a strange thing to have some places of the Book of the Law read, and that before the King.

Secondly, When *Josiah* heard this Book read,

and

and those *Chapters* most likely, his Heart was mightily affected, for there he saw he had gone on in Sin against God, though in Ignorance, but he knew that that would not excuse him, indeed he did not before understand: It appears by his being so affected now, that he did not understand the danger of those Sins that He and his People had continued in: But for all that, assoon as ever he came to know what Sins they were, and in what danger they were, his Heart was exceedingly troubled.

Which teaches us, That we should not think our Ignorance excuses from our Sins, but assoon as ever God brings his Word among us to reveal the Danger of our Sin, God expects that our Hearts should be humbled before Him for our Sin; and he was so humbled as he could not be at rest: And indeed a Heart truly sensible of the evil of Sin, cannot be at rest till it knows further of God's Mind towards it, but will be enquiring by all means that can be, to know further of the Mind of God concerning it: How can I sleep quietly, when I perceive that wrath is out against me, till I know whether God be reconciled to me yea or no; This was the Case of *Josiah*.

Quest. 2. But now in that he sends to *Huldah*. Why? *Jeremiah* he was a Prophet in *Israel* at the same time; Why did he not send to *Jeremiah* that was a famous Prophet. For *Jeremiah* began his Prophecy in the *Thirteenth* year of *Josiah*.

Therefore some would give this Reason, Because *Jeremiah* he was but a young Prophet: For *Jeremiah* began his Prophecy in the *Thirteenth* year of *Josiah*, he had been but *five* years in the Ministery, and he saith of himself, that he was a

Child

Child and could not speak, and therefore they think that *Josiah* did not think it so fit to send to him as to *Huldah*, having more experience, though a Woman. But that I cannot conceive to be the Cause of his not sending to *Jeremiah*, but rather this; It is like *Jeremiah* was not at hand so neat as *Huldah* was: For indeed the Town where *Jeremiah* dwelt was not at *Jerusalem*, he dwelt at *Anathoth*, and it was like he was there. Now the good King was so earnest to know God's Mind, as he would be willing to know it by any though never so mean. Let them be what they will be, so it be we may but come to know what the Mind of God is by them.

Quest. 3. A *Third* Quere that is observable, is in the *Answer* that this Prophet doth give to the Messengers that the King *Josiah* sent; *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the Inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the Book which the King of* Judah *hath read.* It is a very strange *Answer*; What! was not the Countrey in a good and hopeful way for Reformation, that the King of it shall have his Heart to melt, and shall fall a weeping, upon the apprehension of God's displeasure for their Sins that he was convinced of before; but assoon as he was convinced he fell a weeping, and mighty desirous he was to know God's Mind. Were they not now in a mighty hopeful condition for Reformation; and yet for all this there is this *Answer* sent, *That I will bring upon this place, and upon the Inhabitants thereof, all the words of the Book which the King of* Judah *hath read.* This holds forth unto us a very sad Instruction, which is this;

That

That a People may be in such a Condition, as all the Reformation, and all the Repentance in the world, shall not keep them from *Temporal* Afflictions from the hand of God to be out against them in regard of *Temporal* Evils: For if you read afterwards in the *Chapter*, you shall find that there was a mighty *Reformation*: And yet all the words of this Book must be fulfilled.

We see what Sin is, it may make such a breach between God and us, as let us do what we can, it shall not keep us from *Temporal* Afflictions here in this world. We know, all the Repentance of *Moses* could not keep *Moses* from that sad Affliction of being cut off before he came to the Land of *Canaan*, the Lord would not hear *Moses*: Yet no question but *Moses* did repent of that Sin that he did provoke God by, but he would not hear him, he must not go to the Land of *Canaan*. But now, because the Lord doth not reveal this particularly concerning a People now as he did then: We have no cause to determine this against our selves, but only to make use of this so, as we do not dally nor trifle with God, lest the Decree come forth against us, and there be no help for us.

Quest. 4. I but you will say, This *Answer* that the Lord made concerning *Josiah* hath a great deal of difficulty in it, and that is, The Lord would be merciful unto him, and promised him that he should die in peace, and yet in the progress of the Story we find, that *Josiah* was killed in War, he was killed in the Battle: How can this be true now that he should die in peace?

Answ. For the *Answer* to that, I know it is ordinary thus, That *Josiah* died in Peace, because his

his Peace was made with God, his Sins were pardoned, there was Peace between God and his Soul; and therefore let a man die how he will, yet if there be peace between God and him, he dies in peace. Let there be never such Tempests and Storms abroad in the world, yet he dies in peace, so long as there is Peace between God and his Soul.

But I think there is a great deal more than so: We must make this Word of God to be true with a further Answer, and that is, he died in Peace; namely with the Peace of the Kingdom, and indeed that was as Peace to him: For the War that he died in, it was not a War that came against the Kingdom; as you may read after in the Story, about his going to War, the Kingdom did not suffer those dreadful Evils that were threatened: Before *Judah* was carried into Captivity the Lord took him away, so that when he died, he left the Kingdom in a good condition for the present, and he left the Ordinances of God among them: And so it was accounted a dying in Peace, in regard of the Kingdom: And this doth seem to be interpreted thus in 2 *Chron.* 38. 28. where you have this Story repeated again, *Behold, I will gather thee to thy Fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the Evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the Inhabitants of the same.* So that he was gathered to his Fathers in peace, because his Eyes did not see the Evil that after his daies did come upon his Kingdom.

And indeed, let a man die how he will, if so be the Kingdom where he lives, and the Church be

in Peace, and enjoy their Liberties and God's Ordinances, this Man may be said to die in peace, it is peace to me that I leave the Church in Peace, and leave the Kingdom in peace.

Especially knowing that not long after, there shall grievous Distresses befal the Kingdom, he dying before that time: he is here said to die in peace. But this for the giving a little light to this notable and Famous Story, we come now more close to the Words. The answer of the *Prophetess* concerning the King: it begins in ver. 18. *But to the King of Judah which sent you to enquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him, Because thine Heart was tender.* As for the People, I will not be intreated for them, saith God: they shall certainly feel my stroke, and shall have all the Words written in the Book to come upon them.

Obs. From hence the note may be, That when the Lord is bringing Publick Calamity upon a People, he uses to make his *Buts*; his differences: *But* to the King of *Judah*. What is there any Tender Broken Heart, that is Broken for the Sins of the Nation? I will have an Eye upon them: *But* such a one. It's true, sometimes Godly ones may be taken away in the Judgments of a Nation, but it is when God hath some special Work to bring by their Deaths.

But we do not find, that God hath his *Buts* now, for Godly ones are taken away as well as others. Surely my Brethren: It is to make us all Tremble, and to make us that we rest not upon any thing, neither Fasting nor Prayer, but to ly at the Goodness of the Lord to do with us what he pleases. And that God makes not his *Buts* now; It is for some

some Great Work that God hath to bring about, that yet is kept hid from us. But this we must be Confident of, that God will have as much Glory from their Deaths, as he should have had from their Lives; and howsoever the wayes of God are so Dark towards us for the present, yet there is a time when God will make his *But*, when there shall be known a difference between him that Fears God, and him that Fears him not. There are very few (though they are hunted for the Sins of the Nation, yet) that have a Faith for Deliverance from Temporal Judgments, and that might be one Cause. Though the Lord promises Deliverance, yet he would have our Faith to reach unto that promise at least, to roul our Souls upon it more than we do: though it is very hard for any to have such a Faith, to be able to conclude certainly and fully that they shall be delivered from a Temporal Affliction. We are to admire at God's dispensations in this; and to wait for further Revelation of what God intends towards us: well, he makes his *But* concerning the King of *Judah*.

O it becomes the Greatest Ones in the World, Kings and Princes, when God threatens to have their hearts to melt before him, no Man is too great to humble himself before the Great God. Though it is True, we have a vile wretched Generation of Men, that many times though they will quake and shake at the threatnings of one that is their Superiour, yet every vile wretch thinks himself good enough to Sin against the Lord, and to stand out against God's Word; but he did not so.

But you will say, Perhaps he was but a Child? No, he was a King in his full Vigor and Strength,

he was twentie-six years of Age: and that time is the time of the Greatest lustiness that can be; especially for Courtiers and Great Men: yet King *Josiah* at twentie-six years of Age, in the midst of his Nobles, though he was not in any present Danger to the outward view, yet upon the hearing of the Word of the Lord, he doth humble himself, and weeps before the Lord, and therefore this is the answer that comes from God concerning him, *Because thine Heart was tender, &c. I have accepted thee, and thou shalt have peace.*

So that in the Words there are these four things Considerable.

1. What it was that wrought upon the Heart of *Josiah*; What were the occasions of *Josiahs* Heart being made tender?

2. The Frame and Disposition of *Josiah's* Heart; it did melt.

3. The Fruit of this.

First, He did humble himself.

Secondly, He did rend his Cloaths.

Thirdly, He did Weep before the Lord.

Fourthly, and lastly, God's Gracious acceptation of this, *I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.*

I shall not come at this time to handle the Disposition of *Josiah* in this melting frame, all that I shall be able to go through, shall be a point or two about the occasion of this, for so we have that in the Text, *thy Heart was tender*: and thou hast humbled thy self before the Lord. When thou *Heardst* what I spake against the Inhabitants *&c.*

How did he hear it?

By *Shaphan* the Scribes bringing a few old torn rotten Papers, as it is like they were, for they had been hid

hid it may be in some hole of the Wall of the Temple among the Rubbish for many years together, and it is like they were very old Papers, and these were brought before the King and Read, and the Text saith, that *Josiahs Heart was tender, and he did humble himself when he did hear what God spake.* God did not speak to him by a Prophet nor from Heaven. If God had spoken by an audible voice from Heaven to him, and told him of the sins of his Court and Kingdom, then it had been somewhat for him to have his Heart melt; or if the Lord had raised up some extraordinary *Prophet* to come and denounce Dreadful threatnings against him, it had been something: but it was onely upon the hearing of a few Papers that had been found amongst the Rubbish in the Temple. From whence there are these two notes of Observation.

First, When the Lord is pleased to humble any Soul, he can do it with a very little pains.

Secondly, That it is very acceptable to God for the Souls of People presently to relent and yield, and humble themselves presently as soon as ever they hear God's displeasure made out against them. These are the two notes from the cause of the Disposition of *Josiahs* Heart.

The *first*, is a very sweet and excellent point, when God is pleased to Work upon the Heart of a Sinner, a very little matter will make his Heart to relent and yield to God. You have some that will stand out against it very much, and some again, O they yield upon a very little —— what a difference is there between *Josiah* and *Pharaoh*, here are two Kings: *Pharaoh* God sends to him an extraordinary Messenger, he comes in the Name of God and

works miracles before him, many miracles, such as none in his Nation could do. And, besides the miracles, he doth bring more Fearful Judgments upon the whole Kingdom, and upon *Pharaoh* himself, such hideous Judgments as would make a Mans hair almost stand on end, to hear the very relation of them: & he doth follow him with ten Judgments one after another, and yet his Heart will not yield to God; And *Josiah* he doth but hear a little out of some old Papers and his Heart yeilds presently. —— O when God shall work, it is no great matter what the means are, the means may be very little, weak and poor, and yet the heart shall be brought to yield to God in a Gracious and Holy manner. We read in 1 *Kin.* chap. 19. ver. 20. It is a very observable History, *So he departed thence and found* Elisha *the Son of* Shaphat, *who was plowing with twelve yoke of Oxen before him, and* Elijah *passed by him and cast his mantle upon him*: and that was all he did: Now *Elisha* was a Man of very good Rank, though he were at *Plow*, his twelve yoke of Oxen were his own. And *Elijah* did but come by and cast his mantle upon him, and the Text saith, he left the Oxen and ran after *Elijah*, and said, *Let me, I pray thee kiss my Father and Mother, and then I will follow thee, and he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?* I but there was a secret Vertue went together with the casting of the mantle of *Elijah* upon *Elisha*, and then his Heart was towards him, so that none could hinder him from going along with him. So, when the Lord's time is come to gain the Heart of a Man or Woman, the least thing in the World will do it then, he will come in presently: it is just

like

like that concerning *Peter* in *Luk.* 22. 61. *Peter* had sinned exceedingly against *Christ*, and the *Text* saith, that *Christ* did but look upon him, and upon that *Peter* went out and wept bitterly. He did *throw* himself out, that's the propriety of the word, did cast himself out with a kind of violence, he had enough of it; The Lord *Christ* did but give him a look, and he goes and weeps bitterly. Oh there are many that the Lord *Christ* speaks to again and again, and their hearts are not stirred; but when the Lord is pleased to work upon the Heart, it is but God's giving a look to a Soul.

It may be some of you that are going on in sinful waies, and you have heard much against them, and your Hearts are not stir'd. But if the Lord's time be come, it is but one look upon thee, and to open thine eyes, that thou maist have but one view of that God that thou hast sinned against, and the thing will be done. We read in *Cantic.* 5. 4. Saith the Church there, *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my Bowels were moved for him.* The Church being secure, she falls a reasoning against her coming out to Christ, and saith, *I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

O it will be a great deal of trouble, and she was loth to be put to any trouble: But mark this *fourth* Vers. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.* He did but put in his hand at the hole of the door, and my heart was moved: Why was that more than knocking? For he did knock before, I but the time was not come. So it may be with many

a Soul; the Lord may stand knocking at the door of thy Soul again and again, from time to time, and yet thou maist have one excuse or other to put Him off; But when God's time is come, He doth but give one touch to thy Heart, and the thing is done. A little labour will do it when God's time is come. In *Isai.* 11.6. it is prophesied there of the times of the *Gospel*, that they shall be so yieldable to the Truths of God, that a Child shall lead them. Any Truth of God that is delivered by the meanest, by the weakest, by a Child, shall lead them.

And that is very famous in *Isai.* 30.21. *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* What follows, *Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven Images of Silver, and the ornament of thy molten Images of Gold, thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.* This people were much set upon their Idolatry, and the Prophet did find it a very hard thing to take off their hearts from their Idolatrous waies: But now the Lord promises a time that they should hear but a *word*, and that *behind* them too, an inkling, and what shall be the effect of it, *Thou shalt take away the covering of thy graven Images of Silver.* For they were wont to have their Images cloathed very rich, but they should take all that rich and glorious work, and cast it away as a *menstruous* Cloth, and with indignation say, *Get thee hence.* What a change is here, but with hearing *a word behind one!*

And when God's time is come for poor Souls

that

that have heard many *Sermons*, and yet have stood it out against God and his Word; yet, I say, when the time of God is come, and they hear a voice behind them, saying, O Sinner, Oh sinful Soul, thy waies are not good, look about thee. Some such thought that God doth but hint into their Mind, perhaps doth work more in their Hearts, than all the *Sermons* that ever they heard, *They shall hear a voice behind them.* And that in *Joh.* 1. 48, 49. is as observable concerning *Nathaniel.*

When Christ was about to call *Nathaniel* to him, what a poor thing was it did work upon *Nathaniel*'s Spirit, Nathaniel *saith unto him, whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that* Philip *called thee, when thou wast under the Fig-tree, I saw thee.* Mark what follows, Nathaniel *answered and said unto him,* Rabbi, *Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of* Israel. Jesus *answered and said unto him, Because I said, I saw thee under the Fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.* A little thing will work upon the Heart, when the Lord is pleased to call the Sinner. And you know concerning *Matthew*, He did but say, *Come and follow me*; and so of *Zebedee*'s sons, He did but say, *Come and follow me*, and they presently left the Ship, and their Father, and Nets; and *Matthew* he left his receipt of Custome, and followed him. And so the Story, which I suppose you know (that are acquainted with *Scripture*) of *Zacheus*, he was a very vile, covetous wretch, and very few of those are wrought upon; Well, he had heard a fame of Christ, of such a strange kind of man that

was

was abroad in the World, and he would needs go see him; and because People did so flock after him, and he being so low of Stature, he gets upon a Tree: well Christ passing by and looking up, saith unto him, *Zacheus* come down, Salvation is come to thy Soul: he comes down presently and crieth out, *Behold the two parts of my goods I give to the Poor, and if I have wronged any Man, I will restore four-fold.* For a Covetous Man to be willing to part with two part of his Goods to give it to the Poor, and to make restitution four-fold of all the wrong that he hath done; what a deal of do should we have to work upon *Zachenses*, not to give *two parts* of their goods, but *a little* to the poor People of God that are in distress at this time! but now a little will do the business when the time of the Lord is come.

But for the further handling of this Truth which is so sweet for us to meditate upon.

The first Reason of it is from the Power of the Truth, the Truths of God that concern God and our own Souls they are of a mighty Efficacy, if the Truth can get to the Heart, it is no matter what the means be: as now, such kind of *Physick* as is very strong and operative, if it can but get into the Body, though it be, by a little posset Ale, yet if you can get it in, there it will work: so the Truths of God have such abundance of Efficacy, that if they get but into the Heart, they will be Working. As the Broad-Seal of the Kingdom, you know, if it be brought unto a Man, let the Messenger that brings it, have never such a weak hand, and be never such a poor and contemptible Man, yet it carries Authority with it because it is the

Broad-

Broad-Seal: so the Truths of God have a great deal of Authority, and let them but come to hearts, they will work exceedingly, and indeed let the means be what it will be, it is not the means, that works, but God in the means. And as *Asa* said concerning the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *It is ease with thee, O Lord, to be seen by few as well as by many.* So it is all one with God to strike by little and weak, as by strong means.

Object. You will say? What need we then so much Preaching, and such Arguments to work upon our Hearts?

Answ. Yes, we are bound to do what befits Creatures to do, and to leave God to do what pleases him: though the Lord may sometimes take weak means, yet the Lord would have us to make use of all the means that possibly we can; let us attend upon the Lord in all the means that possibly we can, when the Lord is pleased to come & work, let the means be what it will be the thing will be done, because there is the Power of God put forth when at any time the means doth Work.

Suppose one come and preach the most powerful Sermon that ever was, yet except God were pleased to go out with the Word, it would never work savingly to Humble your Souls, you will be hard-hearted for all that. —— And on the other side, let but any hint of a word, though from a Child, yet if God be pleased to put forth his Arm, it shall break the stoutest heart upon the Earth when the Lord is pleased to put forth his Arm.

Another Reason is, because the Lord is pleased sometimes to put the Heart into a better preparation for receiving the Truths than at other-times.

And

And that's the reason some-times why weaker means do good, when stronger will not.

Quest. You will say then, are there preparatory works that can prepare us for Grace?

Ans. Why truly thus far; so prepare, as to take away many things that hinder, and prepare the Heart for taking in of the Truths, but they cannot be preparatory Works so to prepare, as either of congruity to merit, or that God should be ingaged to come in with his Grace, but to prepare, to take away the hinderances: as thus, it is in many Mens Hearts as it is in Wood, sometimes you have Wood that is very knotty, and a great many blows will not rive it asunder: and other Wood one little knock will do it. —— And as it is with the Ground, the Ground when it is dry and hard after a drought, if you put in the Plow it will break: but when the Ground is softned by the Rain, the Plow will easily go then. Jer. 4. 3. *The Work of Humiliation is compared to the Plowing up of the Fallow Ground of the Heart.* Physick a little you know sometimes will Work, when a great deal will not Work at other times. So the Soul is in a Disposition at sometimes to be wrought upon, by lesser means than at another: but yet still the power is all from God. But yet God is pleased still to work suitably to the Disposition of Men and Women; and God is pleased to take the hints and the Advantages of Men and Womens Hearts, for they are not alwaies in the desperate opposition against the Truth; when the Lord comes with the Storm and Rain of Affliction upon the Hearts of Men and Women, O how soft and yeildable are they to any thing that God shall say to them: the Lord is pleased

sed now to take hints and Advantages of such a Condition that Men are put into.

I should have shewn you of some special Dispositions, that are wrought upon more easily than others (I do not now speak of those that are wrought upon for Conversion, but to be humbled before God for Sin sooner than others.

As now, the more Fear of God there is upon a Heart, the more easily will such a Heart be wrought upon. In *Prov.* 28. 14. *There the Fear of God, is opposite to the hardness of Mans Heart.* If the Fear of God be there, it will not be hardned, but if the Fear of God be not, then it is hardned.

And so where the Heart is a humble Heart, there a little matter will work upon it, as the Text *Isa.* 66. *Trembling at God's Word is join'd with a contrite Heart, and poor in Spirit.*

And so where there is a meek Heart, that is wrought upon by little means. *Jam.* 1. 21. If your Heart be froward and perverse it will cast off the Word; but let it meddle with a meek and quiet Heart, and it easily receives in the Word into it.

And so one that hath bin Ignorant a long time, but not affected Ignorance, when the Lord is pleased to discover himself to the Soul, the Soul is ready to take hold on the Word of the Lord: and so *Saul*, though he were Ignorant, when the Lord did but say, I am he whom thou persecutest, O then he Fears and saith, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

And so when the Heart is not hardened with the Custom of sin, less means ordinarily Work upon them than upon old ones: as now young ones, a little

a little hint of God will work upon them. The Hearts of Men and Women that are not hardned in sin, when God pleases to work upon them, a less matter doth it, and brings them over to the Will of God.

But by Way of Application.

In the first place it may be a use of a great deal of Incouragment to all the Ministers of God to Preach to People; it may be sometimes they are even discouraged and think with themselves, Lord, how hard are the Hearts of Men, and how difficult is it to Work upon the Hearts of Men! I have laboured with all my might, I have studied and sought to invent all the Arguments that possibly I could, the most moving Arguments that possibly I could imagin: when I have bin in my Study I have thought with my self, Surely if the Lord be pleased to bless these Truths that I am to deliver, they will work upon the Hearts of People, and when it comes to, perhaps the Minister finds that they are not at all stirred one whit. Why Lord, what shall I do then, I cannot think ever to speak things that are more powerful than those that I have spoken, and those have done no good: therefore I am afraid I shall never do good. O no, do not say so; nor do not think it. For the Lord is pleased sometimes to shew us our Vanity this Way, and to rebuke us, many times the Lord will not go along with the Ministery of the Word, when it comes with the greatest Power and the strongest Arguments; & yet at another time, the Lord will be pleased to bless a Word that you speak, but by the bye; and it shall

shall do more than all the other. There is scarce any one faithful Minister in the world that doth observe the Work of God upon his Ministry, but doth find this. But yet this is no Argument why a Minister should not labour with all his might, and come with the most strong Arguments; he is bound to do his Duty. I but be not discouraged, he may afterwards prevail, and God, I say, may bless many things that comes from him. And therefore I would exhort those that are to speak to such an *Auditory*, in the words of Eccles. 11.6. *In the Morning sow thy Seed, and in the Evening with-hold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be a like good.*

Therefore let Ministers go on, and sow their Seed, and Preach still. And though that which they have spoken, as perhaps they have been delivering of Arguments that they thought would have moved the heart of a Devil, they have been opening the miserable condition of men, and opening the Riches of *Jesus Christ*. Well, but there must be no discouragement, but go on, and sow thy seed in the Morning, and in the Evening with-hold not thy hand, go on and preach still again and again, and let the Word of God be presented before the hearts of people; though it have not wrought at one time, yet it may work at another time: Yea, though thou shouldest grow weaker and weaker, yet for all that the Lord may do good to thee, even when thou art at the weakest. In 2 Tim.2.25. saith the Apostle there to *Timothy, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance.*

pentance. Peradventure this Day a Truth may be handed from God to a Soul, peradventure this Text, peradventure that Text, and so the Soul may be brought in.

Use of Incouragement.

One *Use* more shall be by way of Incouragement to those that feel their Hearts wrought upon by little means: And when God doth but hint a Truth to you when you are reading a *Chapter*, or at your Tables, and conferring one with another, and especially when you come to hear the Word, you hear but some droppings of God's Word, and they work very powerfully upon thy Heart. Are there any such here? Be encouraged, the Lord accepts of this Disposition: Therefore for thy Comfort know,

First, That this is a Sign of a very Child-like disposition in thee: As now, a Father will be very well pleased when as he doth but hold up his Finger to his Child, and the Child comes and falls down upon his Knees presently. A Slave would fall down if you come with blows to him, but a Child with the least look: In Prov. 17. 10. *A Reproof entereth more into a wise man, than an* hundred *stripes into a fool.* Indeed those that are fools, and of base slavish Dispositions they will not be wrought upon by any means: But one that is of an ingenuous Disposition, a word works upon them. And doth thou find thy Heart so tender that a Word works upon thee? This is a Sign of the Wisdom of God that is in thy Soul.

And further, Know it is a Sign that God is in his

his Word, and that God doth accompany what is said to thee? And that's a very comfortable Meditation to think, That, blessed be God, when I hear his Word, any little thing comes to my Heart. And if thou find thy Heart to be of this temper, that thou findest every thing that is said almost to stick upon thee, thou maist have this Comfort, that the Lord doth not absent himself from thee in his Word.

Thirdly, Certainly thou maist have this Comfort, that thou canst not go far from God. Why? Because if a little thing will work upon thee, thou must needs be wrought upon every day: And if thou hast a tender Heart, and wrought upon by a little, I say there is no fear that ever thou shouldst go far from God. Indeed Souls that have stout and stubborn Hearts, they go far off from God; *Hearken to me ye stout-hearted, that are far from Righteousness*, saith the Prophet. Stout Hearts they are far from Righteousness; but now your yieldable Hearts they can never be far from Righteousness. A man that hath a stout Spirit, he may be gone from God a mighty distance before he is aware; but one that is of a yieldable Disposition needs never fear that ever he shall go far off from God. Indeed I may daily fall as others but this hope I have, I shall never go far from God.

Fourthly, Doth thy Heart yield to God upon a little? O be of good Comfort, the Lord hath great things to make known to thy Soul; the Lord will make known great things to that Soul that is moved at a little. That place which is named before in *Joh.* 1. 49. *&c.* is remarkable for this: You know what Christ said to *Nathaniel*, *Dost*

thou believe, because I said, I saw thee under the Fig-tree? thou shalt see greater things than these. So say I unto thy Heart, What, Doth thy Heart relent and come in, and submit to God upon hearing of any little that is made known to thee? O be of good Comfort, O thou Soul. Thou art a Soul that the Lord intends to do great things for, and to reveal great things unto, *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* Is there a Soul that hath the Fear of God, so that every thing works upon that Soul? The Secret of the Lord is with that Soul, and the Lord will reveal his Covenant to that Soul.

Do thou make much of this Disposition of Heart, and when thou seest other men have hard and stout Hearts, bless God that hath given thee such a Disposition of Heart, that a little will serve the turn.

SERM.

SERMON II.

June 6. 1644.

2 Kings 22. 14.

---Because thine heart was tender, &c.

THere is another Use or two remaining of the Point, and then we shall briefly come to the other, that we may make some entrance into that that is the main point in the Text.

Use.

When God's time is come, a little will Work upon the Heart. Then here is rebukt the untowardness of the Hearts of most People, that stand out against very much, it is not a hint of a thing that will Work upon them: How many from hence may be rebukt? I say, that have stood out against Great means to Work upon them. It may be many of you have had Godly parents, and they Laboured with you, your Father your Mother hath Laboured with all their Power, to shew you the evil of your wayes, They have been dropping in Admonitions, Counsels, Exhortations, and all that will not do; perhaps you have come into other Families and all that you see there, and the Incouragments that you might have there, hath done nothing upon you, you have been brought

under a Powerful Ministry, and there sometime you have heard, that that might have made a Devil to tremble. You have heard the Terrours of the Law, and that hath done nothing; yea, you have heard those Heart-melting Mercies of Christ opened to you that might, had they been offered to Devils, have melted the very Heart of a Devil, and they have not wrought neither upon you: you have had the Work of God's Providence, which hath been mighty upon you; you have been often chastised by God, and that hath done nothing; you have received abundance of Mercies, and they have done nothing: Nay, God hath set Conscience upon you, and that hath been terrifying of you, and haling you before the very seat of God's Judgment, and there pleading against you for your Sin, and that hath done nothing, but you shall Continue notwithstanding all these means, as the Rock doth in the midst of the Water, the Water goes by, but the Rock stands where it did: O how far is thy Heart from the Heart of King *Josiah*, that upon the hearing but of som old papers presently had his heart thus melting before the Lord, and thus humbling of himself before him; well, thou that hast a heart upon which it is so difficult to Work, that there must be such a deal of do to Work upon it; Know,

1. *First*, That those things that have left thee, and wrought no good upon thee, are such things that many in Heaven are now Blessing God for: they have found the good of them, thou hast been at the Word, and it hath past by thee and never toucht thy Heart, but many in Heaven are blessing God that they were at that time hearing the

Word,

Word, that thou didst hear so unprofitably.

And know that this is a Disposition very tedious to the Spirit of God, when there is such ado with Mens Hearts that one means must be used after another. We know it is tedious with us, especially when we come to Men and Women and speak to them for their own good, when they will not be perswaded. O know that thou hast a Heart that is of a Disposition very tedious to God, that when God speaks to thee for thine own good, there must be such a deal of do and stir before any thing can do thee any good. And then Know,

Secondly, That it is a dangerous Sign of a Reprobate, if much means work not upon thee: thou art far from the Disposition of such a one that is here spoken of in the Text. That place is famous for this in Jer. 6. 29, 30. *The bellows are burnt, the Lead is consumed of the Fire, the Founder melteth in vain, for the Wicked are not plucked away; Reprobate silver shall Men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.* They are compared here to mettle that the Finer would fain melt, and would purge; now saith the Text, *the bellows are burnt*, there's blowing and puffing to make the Fire hotter and hotter, yet all will not do, the lead is consumed. Finers they use to mingle lead among other pure mettle. But that is consum'd & no good is done upon the mettle. The founder melteth in vain, their Hearts are compared to such mettle as will not be melted? What then, Reprobate Silver shall Men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them, the Lord at length rejects such Hearts as these which have such a deal of do to work upon them: wherefore my Brethren, O labour you to

get such Dispositions of Heart, as a little will work upon you, Remember this Text. Surely when we consider what a God we have to deal with, how infinitely great above us, we must needs be convinced that this God should expect from us, that any hints of his Will should prevail with us, if it be but a Word.

And know, It is a Mercy of God, that thou hast but a hint of his Will, that thou hast but any word to make his Mind known unto thee that concerns the good of thy Soul.

First, God expects that thou shouldest catch at every hint. Perhaps a Minister if he do let fall but some Word by the by, that doth nearly concern thy Soul, though it be not the great Argument that he is Preaching upon; the Lord expects that thou shouldest catch hold of that; and never leave till thou gettest thy Heart affected with it. In 1 *Kin.* 20. We read there of the Servants of *Benhadad*, that when they were seeking for the Life of their Master, to the *King* of *Israel* in *v.* 33. the Text saith, *Now the Men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it*: so when we come to the Word, we are to come before the Great King of Heaven and Earth for our Lives. Now we should diligently observe whether God speak any thing to our Hearts, and hastly catch it: and Blessed are those that have their Hearts wrought thus upon by a little. For though God is pleased to use great means for the good of some, yet as for others, if a little will not do it they shall never be wrought upon.

The next point is, *When thou didst hear Josiah*

upon

upon the hearing of the Book of the Law read, his Heart presently was turned; he did not put it off as *Felix* did, I will hear more of this another time, but presently he yields. From thence the point is,

That it is very acceptable to God for the Souls of People, presently to relent and yield, and humble themselves presently, assoon as ever they hear God's displeasure made out against them.

Sometimes God is pleased to dart in a Truth that doth not work presently, but lies for a long time in the Heart, perhaps lies many Daies, Weeks, Months, sometimes Years. I have known some that upon hearing the Word, have been wrought upon while they have been hearing, but the Lord hath cast it into their Consciences; and upon their Sick-Bed, then it hath wrought upon them: And so some Admonitions and Exhortations that are given to People; that every time doth not hit them, but, it may be, God doth Bless them a great while after. As it is with the Seed that is cast into the Ground, though it do not come up presently if a drought follow, but if a rain follow, then when you thought they had been dead, they will come up. And so it is with the Seed of the Word, We sow it, and a Sun-shine of prosperity follows: and we think it is dead; but God sending some Afflictions a great while after, the Word Springs up: and it is well that the Word of God may work at any time in the Hearts of Men and Women: But it is more acceptable to God, when the Heart yields presently upon the very first hearing: As it was with *David*, he had such a kind of Heart as *Josiah* in the 2 *Sam.* 12. 12. We read there when

the Prophet *Nathan* came to *David* to tell him of his Sins, saith he unto him, v. 7, 8. *Thou art the Man*, and so goes on telling him of his Sin. But, mark in the 13. *v.* when *David* made his Answer, to what *Nathan* spake; And *David* said unto *Nathan*? *I have Sinned against the Lord*, and so was humbled before the Lord presently upon *Nathans* Message unto him: he did not bid *Nathan* go away, and he would think of it after, and consider of it afterwards: But, O I have sinned against the Lord, I have been the Wretch that hath thus provokt the Lord against me, I have sinned, O what shall I do!

And so those in *Acts* 2. As they were hearing, their Hearts were prickt, before they went out of the presence of God: as the very sound of the Word was in their Ears, the prick of God was in their Hearts. And indeed, when the Lord is pleased to come upon the Hearts of his, to draw himself by his Word, the Word will work presently. The Lord he can, when he will set the Key to the Heart so as it shall presently open. Many Mens Hearts are like rusty Locks, there is a great deal of stir to open them, especially if the Key be not the right Key, and fitted to every Ward. But now come to a Lock where the Key is fitted to every Ward fully, a Child may turn it, you can turn it with one of your fingers: So the Lord sometimes indeed doth so speak the Word to many Mens Hearts that are as rusty Locks so that the Word doth not fit: there are many Wards in their Hearts, many Objections lie in their Hearts against the Word, that it doth not fit them, and so their Hearts are not opened; but at another time

the Lord is so pleased to direct his Word, that he makes the Key as fit for such a Mans Heart as can be, and then he opens presently; in an instant the Heart of this Man is opened that hath been shut against God all the daies of his Life before.

Divers reasons there are why the Hearts of Men should open and yield presently unto God.

First, Because of the submission that the creature owes unto God. Why? You expect that your Children should presently yield to you: It is not enough if after a great many Blows and Words they yield to you, you account that to be the part of a stubborn Child; but when a Child shal yield to you presently, that pleases you: Well. So the Lord expects that we should yield to Him presently, not to stand out long, to have many Words and Blows; but that we should presently come in and yield unto him.

Secondly, The present yielding unto God doth prevent abundance of Evil, abundance of Sin is prevented by a present yielding unto God: Many men, though perhaps at length the Lord in his infinite Mercy may convert their Souls that have stood out against him: I but what abundance of Evil hath there been (since that time that God began to stir thee first) committed by thee: Let any man but look back to his former time, and think with himself; Did not God begin with me heretofore? Did not I hear this Word of the Lord before this time? O how happy had it been with me, If I had then yielded at the first? But by standing out, O what abundance of Sin have I committed since that time!

Somewhat now I should have shewn you, What

it

it is that a Soul doth see in God's Word, that doth make it presently yield unto him. But I will rather come briefly to some *Application* of this.

Application.

Wherefore then from hence; *First*, it may be an *Use* of *Consolation* unto such, whose Hearts have come in presently: I hope these are some whose Hearts have been like *Lydia*, that the Lord hath fitted the key of his Word for, and upon the first Hearing of the Word, their Hearts have come in before the Lord. O what great ease of Spirit maist thou have in this, that thou canst be able to say as before the Lord, It's true indeed, there was a time that I went on in Blindness, and Ignorance, and Prophaneness, and Ungodliness; but blessed be God, ever since God hath made known His Will unto me, my Heart hath yielded to Him, Canst thou say so? O what a happy thing were it, if many of you were able to say thus: Lord, indeed I was a wretch in the daies of my ignorance, that liv'd Prophanely, and Ungodlily, because I knew no better, but as soon as ever thou didst reveal thy mind unto me, my heart did come in, and yield to thee.——There's many Men that God is now working upon, and they are coming to seek after God's Mercy, but this Temptation comes upon them, I but thou hast stood out against God all this while, this is that, that hath augmented thy Sins, and will God have Mercy on such a Wretch as hath thus stood out against him? This Temptation lies so heavie upon many, that they

they would give a thousand Worlds to be delivered from it. But now you are delivered from such a Temptation as this is: O Blessed are you that presently yield to the Word of God; in *Rev.* 4. 1. *John* saith of himself, that he heard a Voice as it were of a Trumpet talking with him; then in the second ver. *And immediatly I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne was set in Heaven &c.*

Thou hast heard sometimes the voice of the Word as a Trumpet, and canst thou say immediatly I was in the Spirit, or, immediatly the Spirit was in me? I say, peace be to thee in this thing; For this is very acceptable before the Lord; and it is a sign of an ingenuous Spirit. And know, that the Lord will be as present in the waies of Mercy to thee as thou art present in the hearing of him. Art thou wrought upon presently at the hearing of the Word? Presently I say? the Lord will be present in his Mercy towards thee, he will make as much haste to do thee good as thou canst make haste to yield Obedience unto him; and therefore such kind of People as these are, may expect Comfort sooner than others. There are a great many held under the Terrors of the Law a long time: Why, the Lord deals with them but as they dealt with him; God was calling perhaps upon thee many years before thou didst hearken to him, and therefore thou mayest be willing to stay for comfort, seeing thou didst make God stay so long and didst not come in to him.

But now you young ones, if you come in presently upon the very first notice of the dangerous condition you are in, I say you may find comfort very soon. At the beginning of *Daniels* Supplication the

Lord

Lord heard: O the Lord would not have his mercy stay towards *Daniel*.

But many there are that are to be rebukt from this point, that do stand out against God, and do not presently come and yield.——As the other, a little thing will not work upon them, there must be much ado. So these, whether little or much, yet howsoever for the present they are not wrought upon.

Well, Know every time God speaks to thee, and thy Heart is not toucht, thou doest loose an opportunity for Eternal Life, I, and a large opportunity, for thy Eternal Life is lost, every time God speaks to thee, and thou dost not yield to him; and is not that a great loss?

Secondly, Know this, that it is more unlikely, if thou dost not yield at first upon present hearing of the Word, it is more unlikely that thou wilt yield afterwards; if the Corn doth not sprout and rise up in a certain time, it will never rise up: and so, if the Heart stand out long, it may prove too late for the Word to work upon it.

Then, and further know this, thou that standest long out against God, though God should not at length Work upon thee, thou wilt have more trouble in thy Heart and Conscience a great deal: as an old Sore you know, there is more trouble in the healing of it; So when Hearts stand out long against God, there is the more pain and trouble.

O that the Lord therefore would work presently upon your Hearts. And that's the Exhortation as from God, when you hear his Word, entertain it presently, and yield presently to it, without any

any much adoe; whatsoever Truth you hear, be convinc't of it, whatsoever Admonition you hear, imbrace it presently. For,

First, Certainly that that will be true hereafter, it is truth now, and there's none of you but will wish hereafter that you had yielded and submitted to the Word: O then, if you will wish hereafter you had done it, certainly then there is reason it should be done now. O what will the Word be true when thou comest upon thy sick bed, and death-bed? then it is true now.

Secondly, For ought thou knowest, what ever God speaks to thy Heart, he speaks to thee as the last; the very first speaking may be the last for ought thou knowest: It's true, sometimes it is otherwise, but it is more than any of you can promise, and therefore yield presently to the word.

Thirdly, God may put thee presently into such a Condition, as if he doth not presently grant Mercy to thy Soul, thou art undone for ever; in such a Condition many times are sinners, that all Eternity lies upon the present. And thou mayest be put into such a Condition, that either God must hear thee presently, or else thou art lost for ever; therefore be thou willing to hear God.

Fourthly, Consider the infinite patience of God, already, that thou hast stood out so long; hath not God cut off thy Life? O then thou hast need take heed of standing out any more.

Yea, how often hast thou listned to Temptations; presently that comes to wickedness, and thou canst presently imbrace them: O then when the Word comes so near to thy Heart and speaks to thy Conscience,

science, why canst thou not imbrace that as well? O when the Word comes close, and especially so near that thou canst but say, certainly the Lord intended me this Day; stay out no longer, but yield and submit presently unto him.

But I have stood out a long time, Lord? what shall I do?

It is a Dreadful evil, and thou shouldst be willing to suffer much in regard thou hast stood out so. I, but what sayest thou, if God should yet speak one Word to thee, what's thy resolution now? I put this unto the Consciences of every one in this Congregation, if God shall speak this day any thing that concerns thee in particular: art thou resolved in thine Heart that thou wilt now fall down before him, and yield and submit? if thou shouldest hear any threat in God's Word against thy Sin, art thou resolved now, what lies in thee to renounce that Sin, I put this to thee, whether wilt thou do this, yea or no? What answer would you give to God: if the Lord should this Day, (seeing I am come by his Providence) speak any thing out of his Word that shall concern my sin, I will this day without any further putting off till sickness or Death-bed, I am resolved (God inabling me) I will do what I can to the renouncing of those things which the Word of God shall Condemn? hast thou such a Resolution?

I would be willing to present some Scriptures to some of you especially to those of the most ignorant sort, though perhaps some of you know them, but whether you know them or not, yet I shall present them now in the Name of God unto those that to this day have liv'd

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in those sins, and have not been humbled before God upon the hearing of this Word that I shall now speak unto you.

As that in *Rom.* 1. 18. Consider the Scripture what God speaks to thy Soul now: *For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in unrighteousness.* This is the Word of God to thee this day. Doth not thy Conscience tell thee now that there are some waies of ungodliness and unrighteousness that thou livest in? now God from Heaven tels thee that his wrath from Heaven is revealed against thy Soul if thou dost not Repent: O hear this Word, and let thy Soul be humbled and melt before God.——And you that hold the Truth of God in unrighteousness, that is, you that have convinc't Consciences, you know what your duty is and yet you go against your Conscience, you are those that hold the Truth in unrighteousness, the wrath of God from Heaven is reveal'd against you.

But particularly for Sins: For Swearing: Why, let them consider of these two Texts of Scripture; and see whether their Hearts will yield to them. In *Jer.* 23. 10. *For the Land is full of Adulterers, for because of Swearing the Land mourneth.* This Day we know the Land mourns, and would you know the cause, you may attribute it to this and that, but the Scripture saith *because of Swearing the Land mourns*, I because of thy oaths, they are a part of all the cause of all the Misery of the Kingdom at this day: O the Lord tells thee this, and if thy Heart were tender thou wouldst, humble thy

self

self before the Lord, because of this, and go away with a Heart resolved against thy Sin.

And so that place in *Zach.* 5. 3. is both against this sin, and against the sin of Stealing. *Then said he unto me, This is the Curse that goeth over the face of the whole Earth, for every one that Stealeth shall be cut off, as on this side, according to it, and every one that Sweareth, shall be cut off as on that side.* Here's a great flying Roule, the length whereof is twenty Cubits, and the breadth thereof ten Cubits, and this flying Roul is the Curse going over the face of the whole Earth for every one that stealeth, and for every one that Sweareth. O this Word now hath as much Power in it to work upon thy Heart as the Word that wrought upon *Josiahs*, Art thou resolved against those Sins or not? this God declares unto thee this day. Therefore, if thy Heart be tender, thou wilt go home and humble thy Soul before God in thy closet for thy Sin.

And so for the Sin of Sabbath-breaking, in *Ezek.* 20. 13. (I desire to make an experiment this day, whether it may not be so with some of your hearts) *But the House of Israel rebelled against me in the Wilderness, they walked not in my Statutes, and they despised my Judgments, which if a Man do he shall live in them, and my Sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would powr out my Fury upon them, in the Wilderness to consume them.* This God renews to thee this Day, either thou art resolved to continue in this Way of breaking Gods Sabbaths, or not: if thou beest resolved, this is the Text that concerns thee, and expect to have it made good upon thee, that the Lord shall powr out his Fury upon thee,

thee to consume thee. But upon the Reading of this Text, thy Heart falls and yields, and thou art humbled before the Lord; O well and good, the Word hath the true Fruit of that it aims at: surely if *Josiah* had heard such a Word as this, his heart would have melted.

And then again for the sin of uncleanness, I will give you two Texts of Scripture out of God's Word, and read them unto you, they are dreadful ones, and I verily believe *Josiah* had no such word read to him, as I shall read to you against this sin: The first, in *Prov.* 22. 14. *The mouth of strange Women is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.* Here's a Text now for all unclean wretches that are inticed by the Mouths of strange Women, mark what God saith to thy Soul this Day, *that Man that is abhorred of God, falls into this pit.* O dreadful expression! is it possible for any Man to speak more dreadfully than thus, that the Man that is abhorred of God, shall fall into the Pit of the Whore? and how often have some of you fallen into her Pit! Either you must acknowledge the Word of God or not; if not, you are *Atheists.* And if this be not God's Word, then there is nothing in God's Word that you can lay your Salvation upon; What do you rest upon to be saved by, if not upon the Word? and if upon any part of it, why not upon this? Certainly there is as much Authority and strength in this to humble, as there is to save: and this is that, that I in the Name of God, not barely reade, but speak it to you from God's Word: that the Man that is abhorred of God, falls into the pit of the Whore. Now either go away with a Resolution to slight and disregard the

Word, or to continue, or not; which of the three? either to slight or disregard what is said, or yet to resolve to venture, or be humbled before God, because of the evil that the Word of God doth so dreadfully speak against: O it were a Dreadful thing if any one in this Congregation should go away with either slighting, or resolving to continue to venture! O that the Lord would accompany the reading of this to you, as he did the reading of the Book to *Josiah*, that the Lord might have some Soul that might fall down, and tremble before him this day and give Glory to him!

The other Scripture is in 2 *Pet.* 2. 9, 10. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation: and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished, but chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness.* The Lord knows how to reserve *all* Wicked Men to the Day of Judgment, but *chiefly* them that walk after the Flesh in the lust of uncleanness.——Now it may be some of you may put off this, that you have not been notoriously wicked in the Actual sin of uncleanness; but mark the Word of the Lord in *Rom.* 8. 13. *For if you live after the Flesh, you shall Die*: that is, perish eternally: if you make the comforts of your lives to consist in making provision for the Flesh, and to satisfie the Flesh, though it be not in such Wicked waies of uncleanness, you shall die.

I, but notwithstanding all this, yet some may go away guilty and hardned in their Sin as they came: therefore I will but read you one Word more, and that is in *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. *And it came to pass that when he heareth the words of this Curse, that he bless himself*

himself in his Heart saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the Imaginations of my Heart, to adde Drunkennesse to Thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but then the Anger of the Lord, and his Jealousie shall smoke against that Man, and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him: and the Lord shall blot out his Name from under Heaven.

Those that shall yet bless themselves in their Wickedness, and say, For all that the Minister speaks I shall have peace; O that the Lord would settle this Word upon you. I the rather reade it, because I am afraid there be many in this place that never read Scripture in their Families, and therefore I desire they might meet with such Texts of Scripture now in this Ordinance of God: It may be this one Text was one of the Texts that *Josiah* heard read, you hear it read over again, O that the Lord would bless these few sentences of Scripture that are read to you out of his Word, that so you may go away with tender Hearts, humbled before the Lord, and resolved against your sin. But to come to the next point, Which is,

That a tender Heart is very acceptable unto God; *Because thine Heart was tender.*

This is that that I had thought to have spent the most part of the time in: that which the Scripture here calls *a tender Heart*, it is else-where call'd by other names, as a contrite Heart, and a broken Heart, but especially that which we have in *Ezek.* of a Heart of Flesh, that's the very same that this is. *David* is said to be a Man after God's own Heart; and this in a more special manner, because he was a Man of a very tender melting Heart.

Now then, in the handling of this point, I shall first indeavour to open to you what a tender Heart is: which is to be done two waies: Either by showing wherein it consists, or the Difference of a Tender Heart from the softness of Nature, from those Flashes that some meet withal in the Word, or from the Terrours of the Law. But it may be referr'd to the *Application*.

But that that we will indeavour now, is to open wherein the true tenderness of Heart doth consist, and then we shall indeavour to shew the preciousness of it, how precious it is before God, and how God doth manifest his wonderful acceptation of a tender Heart.

The *Philosophers* description of a soft thing is, that that easily gives way to touch, and a hard thing is that that d th with much adoe yield to touch: So that here's the first, a tender Heart is such a Heart as doth easily yield to God, yield to God's touch. As now we know Wool, lay your finger upon Wool and it yields, but lay your finger upon a stone and it will not yield; lay your finger upon flesh and flesh will yield, but lay your finger upon Iron and that will not yield: so a Heart that yields to God, that's the soft tender Heart, and the Heart that stands out against God that's the hard Heart; when a Man will easily yield to the touch of God's Word, he shall easily be convinced by God's Word, and not stand out objecting against the Word of God; when-as Conscience shall easily yield to what is said, and apply the Word to ones self, when-as the Will shal fall down before the Word: that although before the Heart went after Wickedness, yet now when the Word comes

comes to oppose it, the Will of a Man gives way to God's Word; Let God's Word take place, and not my Will saith such a Soul: and so the Affections, when they shall give way to the Word of God: this is a Sign of a tender Heart.

Yea, and not only yielding to God, but yielding to Men too: for the tenderness of Heart will be discovered in ones easily yielding to Men: that if there be any thing that is offensive justly to his Brethren he yields it; he will not stand out to maintain any thing to satisfie his own will withal, but, if he sees it may be justly offensive to his Brethren, he yields.

Secondly, As there is a yieldableness in a tender Heart: so a *sensibleness*. A tender Heart is such a one as is full of sence: as the Flesh you know, if you do but prick it with a pin, the Flesh feels it; The Heart of Flesh is such a Heart as is sensible of what is said to it, is sensible of God's displeasure; O the apprehensions of any displeasure of God it doth go to the very Heart indeed, that the infinite God should be displeased by it.

And it is sensible of its own vileness and wretchedness, so as it doth even loath it self before the Lord. It is sensible of the Word, when the Word shal speak to it, it is very sensible of it: yea, it is so sensible of any thing of God, any displeasure of God, and of its own sin, or what the Word saith, that indeed it doth faint before God, so as there is no Creature-comfort in the World can keep it from failing. A tender Heart doth not consist meerly in being suitable of any degree, but so sensible as it would certainly faint under the sence of this displeasure of God, did not God come in with his own hand to support and help that Soul: hence in

Deut. 20. 3. The Word that is Translated there, *a fainting Heart*, it is the same word with that in my Text, *let not your hearts be made tender, or faint.* So this is the right tenderness, when there is such a softness of Heart, when the Heart is so sensible of God's displeasure and its own vileness, and of the Word, as it would faint before the Lord, if so be that the Lord did not uphold it by his Spirit. ——Yea, likewise it is sensible of all God's Mercies, sensible of all its own unkindness against God, and of all the kindness it doth receive from God. The kindness of God breaks this Heart, and melts it: it is as the shine of the Sun upon the Ice that doth thaw the Ice, and so the Beams of God's Mercy do ever more melt the Heart of one that is of such a tender disposition as we are speaking of. The Heart of a Man or Woman that is the less Affected, the less he is Afflicted, certainly such a Man or Woman hath a hard Heart: But now the Heart that is soft and tender, it is not onely Affected with its sin, and God's displeasure, but with Gods Mercy likewise, and the Heart melts as well upon the apprehension of Mercy, as of Sin.

And likewise is very sensible of the misery of others; why should other of our Brethren be in a harder Condition than we are, we are as unworthy as they, thus do tender Hearts reason: and their Hearts do even melt before God upon the apprehension of the misery of others, and that they who are so unworthy should rather enjoy Peace, and Liberty, and Comfort, and others of their Brethren do suffer such hard things: but hard Hearts do not care, so they may be at home, and lie warm, and have their Tables spread, what do they

they care, but a tender Heart is a sensible Heart. Yea, a tender Heart is both yieldable and searchable without any great noise, he makes no great noise, this is true tenderness and melting of Heart. You know a tender thing yields, and the flesh is sensible. Mettles, they melt, and yield, and fall, and that in a still way, they make no noise; and so a true tender melting Heart is very yieldable to God, and sensible of its own Sin without any great noise: Those kind of Men and Women that are humbled for their Sin, and make a great deal of disturbance in the Family where they live, that behave themselves in such a violent way, so as, I say, make disturbances where they live: This is not the Right Gospel-tenderness, this is not the melting of Spirit. Cast some things into the Fire, and as soon as they feel the heat they make a great deal of stir, but when the Mettle feels the heat of the Fire, it falls down and yields without any noise: and so when God makes a true tender melting Heart to be sensible of sin, it is so sensible as it makes no great noise, but carries things in a quiet way.

You will say, How can we be quiet, when we apprehend so much danger for our sin?

Yes, my Brethren: and this is the Mystery of Godliness in true Gospel-humiliation, and lay up this, you that yet do not understand it, lay it up against such times as the Lord shall affect your Hearts for your sin.

And then a Fourth thing is, It is such a Heart as will take any impression from God, or be cast into any mould that God would have it: as now, melt a piece of Wax, and you may put what im-

preſſion you will upon it: but if you ſhould take a Seal, and put it upon a ſtone, there it will take no Impreſſion, but upon a tender thing.

So the Heart that is tender is preſent before the Lord, and is ready to take any ſtamp that the Word of God ſhall put upon it. Look what holineſs is in God's Word, according to the capacity of it, it takes the very impreſſion of God's Holineſs. So that after they have heard the Word, there will appear the very print of thoſe Truths upon the Heart: and ſo likewiſe, for being caſt into any mould you know things that are ſoft you may eaſily mould them, or the mettle when it is melted you may put it into any mould, and it will take the faſhion of the mould, but hard things will not do ſo; thus it is with a tender Heart, it is caſt into whatſoever God would have it, into the very mould of the Word. We have a notable Scripture for this in *Rom. 6. 17.* (of any Tranſlation in the New Teſtament, I do wonder at the Tranſlation of thoſe words) *Ye have obeyed from the Heart that form of Doctrine which was delivered to you.* It ſhould be tranſlated thus; that form of Doctrine *into which you were delivered:* into which form of Doctrine you were delivered. So that you have from the Heart obeyed that form of Doctrine into which the Spirit of God did deliver you. So that the Form of Doctrine is compared to a mould, and the Heart of Man to mettles that are melted, and the Spirit of God to the Founder, the Founder takes mettle that is melted and powres into the mould, and though the mettles were of ſuch and ſuch faſhions before, yet

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now it comes to be of the same fashion the mould is of; so it is with a tender melting Heart. A sinner that hath lived a long time in such and such Courses of sin and Wickedness, comes to the Word of God, and the heat of God's Word works upon him, so as it melts his Heart; and then the Spirit of God comes and takes the Heart of this old sinner, and puts it into the mould of this Word, and so makes him a vessel of honour.

Now these five things may serve turn to open wherein lies the Nature of a tender Heart, and whereby in part you may examine: whether your Hearts be tender yea or no. We should have come to several other things, for the further opening and shewing the Nature of a Tender Heart, but I shall chuse rather to refer them to the Application.

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SERM.

SERMON III.

June 23. 1644.

2 Kings 22. 19.

--Because thine heart was tender, &c.

The Preciousness of a Tender Heart.

ALL that I shall do at this time, is to shew unto you the Preciousness of this Tender Heart, and how God accepts of it; and then conclude by way of Comfort to them that have such Tender Spirits.

For the *first*, the Preciousness of this Tender Heart; *I have heard thee, said God:* O it is a disposition that I prize exceeding much! Is thy Heart Tender?

First know, it is very Precious, because it is a special Fruit of the Covenant of Grace wheresoever it is. Doth thy Heart begin to melt to God? surely this comes from God's Heart melting towards thee first, and that in the way of the Covenant of Grace. Those Heart-melting means in the Covenant of Grace, do begin to flow in upon thee, when thy Heart begins to melt towards God. That *Ezek.* 36. is a clear Text, by all Divines interpreted of the

the Promise of the Covenant of Grace, and as a special Fruit of it, *ver.* 26. there is a Promise, *A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the Stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments and do them.* A new Heart! every one naturally hath a hard Heart; though some Men and Womens Hearts may seem to be softer than others, yet every one in the World hath a hard Heart: What is this new Heart that God Promises to give? *Why, I will take away the stony Heart; and I will give an Heart of Flesh.* Here's the Fruit of the Covenant of Grace; whosoever then hath this Tender Heart, is one certainly received into the Covenant of Grace, and that shews a great deal of Preciousness that there is in it, for all things that are proper to the Covenant of Grace are Precious things, for the Covenant is a Precious Covenant, and the Treasures of the riches of God's Grace in the Covenant are very Precious indeed, and this is one of the choice Jewels that there is in the Treasures of the Covenant of Grace, and God gives thee this choice Jewel out of the Treasures of the Covenant of Grace, when he gives thee a Tender Heart.

Certainly, if God should give unto thee Kingdoms to possess: if he should give unto thee the possession of all the World, it were nothing to this gift. For God may give the possession of this World unto one that he will never receive into Covenant with him; God may give all this World out of his General Bounty and Patience. I remember

ber *Lumber* saith of the whole *Empire* of the Turk, It is onely a crum that great House-holder the Lord doth cast to his Dog, all the Empire; but now this tenderness of heart is a Fruit of the Covenant of Grace, & to have the least fruit of the Covenant of grace, is a greater mercy then to have al the fruits of God's general Bounty and Patience.

Secondly, A Tender Heart is very Precious, because it hath in it so many Graces to be the ingredients of it. For indeed the Heart of Man is supple and made tender by the composition, and mixture of many of the Graces of God's Spirit. The Oile that doth supple the Heart of a Sinner, is an Oile that is compounded of abundance of Graces; indeed all the Graces of the Spirit of God, are but the ingredients into this composition that doth supple the Heart of a Sinner: there you may see *Humility*, and *Faith*, and *Wisdom*, and *Patience*: add what Grace you can name, it is in this composition. God sees all Graces.

I remember *Chrysostom* expressing this that I am now Preaching, of Tenderness of Spirit, and the excellency of it, saith he, When the Spirit of God works this Tenderness, it is like some Lady that is making of some precious compound, some sovereign Balsom, and she hath all her Maidens of Honour attending upon her, and she calls to one to fetch this ingredient, and to another to fetch the other, and she takes them altogether and makes a soveraign Balsom or Oile, or what she hath a desire to do. So, saith he, the Spirit of God doth as it were cal all Graces to come in to make this compound of this Oyl to supple the Heart of a Sinner. And the truth is therefore, though thou poor tender Spi-

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rit art not able to see the distinct workings of those Graces, yet they are there in thee: as in an Oyle that a Physitian should prescribe you, such or such an Oyle, or a Conserve, made of such ingredients; saith he, you must take such a thing made of such ingredients, if you will be cur'd: upon which he goes to the Apothecary and carries the Bill, now the Apothecary gives him onely a little Oyl, or conserve in a Glass; I but, saith he, the Physitian tells me there must be a great many particulars in it: the Apothecary tells him here is all, and it is made out of those particulars, though he is not able to discern them.

So it is here in a Soul, the Scripture requires several Graces, *Faith*, *Humility*, *Patience*, *Heavenly-mindedness* and the like. Now a poor Sinner that hath this Tenderness of Spirit, many times is troubled because it cannot find the exercise of such and such particular Graces: I but now, hast thou a Tender Spirit, thou hast them all, they are all there, they are all in the Oyle that did supple thy Heart, if there had been wanting any one Grace of God's Spirit, that is, a Saving Grace, thy Heart had never been brought to this Tenderness, and that shews the Preciousness of a Tender Spirit.

3. A third thing that shews the Preciousness of a tender spirit is this, that it is a disposition that doth put the Soul into a fitness for Mercy, it fits *the Soul for any* mercy that the Lord hath to bestow upon it. Saith *Bernard*, God doth not use to powr the Oil of his Mercy, but into a Contrite Heart: and so it is certain. But now if the Heart be contrite and Tender, the Lord then presently powrs the Oil of his Mercy into such a one: it is in a fitness for

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to receive any Mercy, and the Lord who doth delight in Mercy, surely he will not lose the Glory of it when he sees a subject capable of it, and fitted for it. Now thy Soul is made fit to receive any Mercy that the Lord hath to bestow, and the Lord is infinitely willing for to bestow Mercy; there is no other reason why any Man or Woman in the World wants Mercy but because their vessel is not fit, it is not in a fitness for it. You will say indeed, God might make them fit; I but God is not pleased to put forth his Almighty Power to make fit every vessel: but if once it appear that God hath such a Love to such a Soul, as to make fit such a vessel for Mercy, such a Soul may fully conclude, that there is Mercy enough for it: perhaps thou hast it not for the present, but this is certain, there is as much for thee as thou canst hold; I may say to thee, as the Lord doth to his People in another case, I know the thoughts that I have towards them, the thoughts of Peace and Love: so whatsoever thy thoughts are, thou art afraid, yet the Lord saith to thee; I know the thoughts that I have towards this Sinner, the thoughts of Love & Mercy. I might give you many Scriptures to shew how this disposition doth put the Soul into a fitness for Mercy; that's a notable one in *Zech.* 12. 10. *I will powre upon the House of David, and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son*: I will powre out the Spirit; what Spirit? the same that was promised before in *Ezek.* and so he describes the manner of their mourning. Then

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in the beginning of the 13. *ib. In that day there shall be a Fountain opened*, and a Fountain of Mercy opened; and it shall flow in upon their Hearts when they have such a Spirit as this powred out upon them. Here you have the Spirit of Grace and mourning put together; a Tender Heart is called a Spirit of Grace, not only because of the free Grace of God in it; but because of the many Graces of God that are powred into the Heart, when that is powred into it: that's a third thing.

4. And then a fourth thing wherein the Preciousness of this appears is in this, That it doth make the Soul fit for a kindly work of all Ordinances, and of all the waies of God towards it. As now, it fits the Soul for hearing of the Word, as it did *Josiahs*, how did *Josiah* Sanctifie the Name of God, in hearing Gods Word at this time!——And for receiving of the Sacrament there's nothing more suitable than this Tenderness of Spirit: Why, for then you come to have Communion with *Jesus Christ*, and saith the Text, *Of his fulness we receive, and Grace for Grace*: that is, as the Print of the Seal is in the Wax, there is Print for Print, look what there is in the Seal, the same there is in the Wax. So the Soul hath Grace for Grace, *i.e.* suitable to the Grace in *Christ*, there is the print of that Grace upon the Heart. Now when we come to receive the Sacrament, we come to have communion with *Jesus Christ* that we might receive of his fulness, and especially we come to have the Seal of the Covenant of Grace set upon our Hearts, for that's the nature of a Sacrament: it is the Seal of the Righteousness of Faith. Now what fitter dis-

position

position of Heart for a Seal than of a soft Heart? When you come to the Sacrament, a great care you should have that you come with soft Hearts, that you bring this Tender Heart with you, for you there bring your Hearts to have the Seal of the Covenant of Grace set upon them. Oh this is a Precious Disposition, the Lord loves it well, when he sees a Company come to receive the Sacrament, who have softned their Hearts before they come, and so prepared the Soul fit to have the Seal set upon it. All God's waies do work good upon a tender Heart, if there be but the least Mercy of God, any beam of God's Love melts a Tender Heart, and therefore it is very Precious in the Eye of God.

5. It doth much honour God, it lifts up God's Name. No disposition in the World doth honour the Name of God more than a Tender Heart: more reverences God, and Fears before him and acknowledges his Soveraingty and Power, and gives him the Glory of his Justice and Mercy: here's a disposition that Glorifies God, as one way I told you of a Trembling Heart that Glorified God, so a Tender Heart doth much advance the Name of God.

6. It is a disposition that doth commend all our services to God, and makes them acceptable, and without this no service that we can perform is any waies acceptable unto God. That famous place I suppose you cannot but take notice of, in *Psa.* 51. Where the Prophet saith of a Contrite Spirit, *v.* 17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, a broken and a Contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not Despise.* Mark, this broken and Contrite Heart is

is all one with that in the Text, and this tender Heart it is the *Sacrifices* of God, *Sacrifices* in the plural number. Now that's to note the choice of all Sacrifices, the choice of all Sacrifices is a Tender Heart: it's that that God doth require above all Sacrifices.

And then Secondly, It is that that is instead of all Sacrifices; if thou canst not offer any thing else to God, yet if thou canst offer this Sacrifice, God is well pleased. Many poor Sinners complain and are troubled, that they can do but very little for God, but canst thou offer up to God a Tender Spirit, a Contrite Heart? I say, this is instead of all Sacrifices whatsoever, before him.

And then Thirdly, The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; that is, here's a disposition that commends any other Sacrifice, let but this Sacrifice be put in, and it is all one as if all other Sacrifices were there, and any thing must needs be acceptable where this is, and nothing without it. In *Isa. 66. Saith the Lord: but to this Man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* And then it follows, that he that offers up Sacrifice there is but as if he slew a Man, or cut off a Dogs neck, that is, one that is not of that Contrite and Humble and Tender Spirit, all his Sacrifices are cast off. Now what an excellent Disposition is this, that it commends all our Sacrifices: and it is instead of all Sacrifices whatsoever before the Lord.

7. Further, a Pretious Disposition it is, for such a one that hath a Tender Heart cannot but keep close to God, and cleave to him; it is a disposition

that keeps the Heart continually close to God: for if there be but the least declining in a Soul, that hath a Tender Heart quickly he perceives it, and cannot be quiet till he gets to God again, and if the Lord doth withdraw himself but never so little, one that is of a Tender Heart he is sensible of that; so that it is a disposition pretious in this, because it keeps the Heart of a Sinner close to God.

8. Lastly, a Tender Heart is a disposition that makes a Man or Woman a very useful member in Church or Common-Wealth, makes them an useful companion: for one that is of a Tender Spirit is alwaies one that is very harmlef. A sowre Spirit is one that is very troublesome where he lives, but a Tender Spirit yields to any thing, if so be that God shews him the reason. And he is of a quiet and Gentle disposition, such a one is very sensible of the Publick-good, or the Publick-evil; one that is of a Tender Spirit is as sensible of the good of others many times as of himself: come and propound any thing to him that concerns the Glory of God or the publick good, you make him presently sensible of it, because he is of a Tender Spirit: whereas come to another and propound any thing to him, that doth not concern their Flesh, & the satisfaction of that, you cannot make them sensible of it, but a Tender Spirit is sensible of any thing you propound to him for God or for the good of others: here's the excellence of a Tender Spirit. Now the Lord doth manifelt a great deal of high esteem of this Tender Spirit.

First, Here's the principal Object that draws God's

God's Eye in all the World, the Lord looks towards him, in *Isa. 66. But to this Man will I look, saith God*, &c. there is no Object then upon the Face of the Earth that draws the Eye of God more to it than this doth.

Secondly, The Heart of God is much towards such a one. That place that we have concerning *Ephraim* is full for that in *Jer.* 31. 18. I have surely heard *Ephraim* bemoaning himself thus, *Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised. Ephraim* sate alone and was bemoaning himself, his Heart began to break, and he was Lamenting his Condition all alone: mark now how God's Heart is affected to him in the twentieth verse. *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my Bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have Mercy upon him saith the Lord.* Is there any Soul that shall get alone, bemoaning it self and its sin out of a true sence of the evil of it, and the dishonour that God hath had by its sin, the Lord looks upon such a one with his Heart towards him, his bowels do yearn towards such a one.

Thirdly, Which is a principal one to consider on, and that that hath in it indeed enough if we should say no more, but I shall not be large in this: *Jesus Christ* is anointed by God the Father in special purpose, to be the comforter of such a Heart, wheresoever I say, there is such a Tender, broken, contrite Heart, for they are the same expressions of the same disposition, let such a one know, that God the Father hath anointed his Son on purpose to be the comforter to such a Soul. That appears

clearly in *Isa.* 61. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-Hearted,* and then ver. 3. *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for Ashes, the Oyl of joy for mourning, the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness, that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be Glorified.* The Spirit of the Lord God is upon *Jesus Christ* and hath anointed *Jesus Christ* to Preach good tidings to those that are of broken Spirits, and to appoint unto them that mourn in *Zion,* and to give unto them Beauty for Ashes *&c.* Surely the Soul cannot want Comfort that *Jesus Christ* is by God the Father designed in way of Office to Comfort; he is a *Christ* for it, that he may Comfort it: For so when it is said, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me;* It is as much as if it had been said, the Lord God the Father, hath made me *Christ*, for so the Word *Christ* signifies nothing but *Anointed*; hath made me a *Christ* that I might preach good tidings to the broken-Hearted Sinners. Here's God's accepting now of a Tender Spirit, when he will send his Son out of his Bosom, and bids him go into the World and take it as a principal part of his Office to be a Comforter to such Tender Spirits; to pour the Oyl of Joy, that hath had before another Oil to supple their Hearts and make them thus Tender: And that's the third thing.

Fourthly, The many pretious Promises that there are in Scripture, especially directed unto them: (every one of them is worth a Kingdom) for

For so the Scripture calls the Promises, *exceeding great* and Pretious Promises, and the Saints do account their Riches to consist in the Promises. That one Promise in *Psa.* 34. one that hath a Tender Spirit would not be without for a World, *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit*, and then that other Promise in *Isa.* 57. 15. that's rather more full than this, *For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and Holy Place, with him also that is of a Contrite and Humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the Contrite ones.* My Brethren, though Heaven be a Glorious mansion of God, yet it will not serve his turn: God doth not think that enough, unless he hath a dwelling likewise in a tender broken humble Spirit, that's the dwelling that the Lord prizes as well as the dwelling in Heaven. As ye know Great Princes, they have several Palaces in several Countries, so the great King of all the World, keeps his Court in Heaven and in a Contrite Heart, those are the two Principal places. Though Princes have in several places where they use to go, some Houses of their own, yet commonly you shall have them have some two or three principal Places for the Court: So though the Lord have all the World where he is, and fills Heaven and Earth; yet the two great Places where he keeps his Court is the highest Heavens and the lowest Heart; and mark, he is said to *dwell* with them. You know when a Man doth pass by, he may be bountiful in passing by, but in the place of his residence there

he is most useful; a Man in his Travel going by, he may do good to some, but he is most useful where he dwells; so the Lord, though he may bestow some common favours in passing by to others, yea the Lord there lets out his Mercy where he dwells. God dwells in the Heart, God abides there in a constant way for the Communication of himself unto them; and to what End? he dwells with the Contrite Spirit *to revive them*, the Living God is alwaies dwelling with them: let thy dwelling be never so mean, never such a poor dark hole that thou are fain to hide thy Head in; yet having a Contrite Heart, know that there is a Glorious Palace for the Great King of Heaven and Earth to dwell in. Many Promises we have, *Blessed are those that mourn, and Blessed are the Poor in Spirit*, and the like. Time would quickly be gone if we should name the several Promises, and look out in Scripture what the Lord saith of this disposition of a Tender Spirit. And that's another thing wherein God manifests his high respect unto them.

Fifthly, That the Lord doth exceedingly Tender one that is of a Tender Heart in the time of his Affliction; if there be any burden upon one that is of a Tender Spirit, the Lord knows such a one is sensible of it, and therefore he is sensible of their Condition; the Lord is as sensible of thy Condition as thou art sensible of thy burden, and the great Care of God is that such a one should never fail before him: so we have it in *Isa.* 57. the forenamed place, where he said, he dwelt with him that is of an Humble and Contrite Spirit, *For saith he*,

be; I will not contend for ever, neither will I be alwaies wroth: for the Spirit ſhould fail before me, and the Souls which I have made. O ſaith God, I will not ſuffer burdens to be alwaies upon them though I may for ſome ſpecial end that I have, and good unto them, manifeſt for the preſent ſome diſpleaſure yet I will not be alwaies wroth: I know they are ſenſible of the leaſt diſpleaſure of mine, and therefore I will be tender over them who have ſuch tender Hearts, leſt ſaith the Lord, the Spirit ſhould fail before me: their Spirits are ready to fail before the Lord, if the Lord come out againſt them in an anger. Therefore in *Iſa.* 27. ſaith the Lord there, *Fury is not in me*, but who will ſet Briers and Thorns before me I will go through them, Saith God; as for mine own People, I will be tender over them, and will manifeſt no fury towards them, but indeed for your hard Hearts, that are as the Briers and Thorns, let them be ſet before me, thoſe that are of rugged and ſowre Spirits, let them be ſet before me, and my Fury ſhall go through them, and burn them up together; but the Lord is tender over thoſe that have ſuch tender Spirits.

Sixthly, again, He doth ſeal ſuch up for Mercy in time of publick calamity: in *Ezek.* 9. you may find that thoſe that did mourn for the ſins that were committed, the Lord gave a Command that the Seal of preſervation ſhould be ſet upon them, before the City ſhould be deſtroyed; So certainly, whereſoever there is any Tender Spirit, the Lord doth ſet a Seal of Mercy upon them; and ſo then whatſoever Calamity comes upon the

place where such a one lives, he shall be marked out for Mercy. And so we know it was with *Josiah*, that was one special evidence that the Lord would shew of his Mercy to *Josiah*, that he should not see the Calamity that was to come, but he should be delivered before it came.

And that lets out to get a further expression of God's Love to a Tender Spirit, and that is, that in case the Lord sees that there are Calamities coming upon Kingdoms, and he sees such a Man or Womans Heart being so tender will not be able to bear those Calamities, the Lord in much Love takes them away to himself before they come, and that is most proper for the example of *Josiah*.

I say, where the Lord sees Men and Women of Tender Spirits, so as they are not able to bear the sight of the Grievous Calamities that God intends to Places, where the Lord will manifest his sore displeasure, in much Love God takes them away before; for *Josiah* was taken away, but not by the War of his own Country, of his Kingdom, but it was the War of one King against another; for the War against the Kingdom was not come until God took away *Josiah*: and so I make no Question, but the Lord hath shewn Mercy to many of our Fore-Fathers, that in their time did lament the Sins of the Kingdom, some the Lord removed away from us, and others the Lord took away by Death, that were Men and Women of Tender Spirits: because the Lord saw that they could not bear, to see and hear the Dreadful things that we are reserved to see and hear: But indeed the Truth

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is, it is that the Lord hath reserved us, a hard hearted Generation to: We now indeed can hear of Dreadful things, but because they are at some distance from us, we are not sensible at all of the Dreadful things that others suffer, so that it seems the Lord hath reserved this Generation to see and hear, and feel Dreadful things; the Lord hath taken away the Tender-Hearted Generation. If a Mothers Breast be to be cut off having a Cancer or a Woolfe, or some such Disease in it, the Father will get away the young Tender Children that he knows are not able to bear such a sight, to have their Mothers Brest cut off; and to hear and see her to be in such pain as she must needs be in: even so God the Father doth take away his Tender-Hearted Servants, when their Mother the Church must have as it were her Breasts cut and Lanc'd, nay cut and Sear'd. When Grievous Afflictions are coming upon the Church, the Lord doth Ordinarily take away such tender Spirits before hand; because they are not able to bear such a sight, nor hear such Dreadful things as they must hear: and in this God shews a great deal of respect to his Servants, many of his Servants that have spent much time alone Lamenting the Sins of the Nation, are now taken away from the evil that was to come, and the Lord hath taken them up to himself: for if their Hearts were thus Affected, lest the Sword should come, O how would they be able to bear if they had seen and heard such things as we see and hear at this very day.

Application

Application.

Now then I shall endeavour to wind up all in a word or two of *Application.* I had thought to have shown how God reveals himself to them, and how they prevail most with God in Prayer; the Lord hears the Prayers of the Poor, he doth prepare their hearts and incline his Ear to hear their Prayers.

Hence then if a tender heart be thus precious and so highly valued by God, it is a very dangerous thing for any one to wrong one of a tender heart; therefore let men take heed of it, for God will right it: God hath a mighty high esteem of such as those are, and it may be, because they are of tender and humble Spirits you may venture upon it, they will not give you blow for blow perhaps, but they get themselves alone and make their moan to their Father, and tell him of all the wrongs that you have done to them, and so they open their hearts to God, and they ease themselves that way. Many of you when you are wronged by others, you have no other way to ease your hearts but this, that you must rail again, and give them as good as they bring; I, but one of a tender Spirit hath a better way to ease himself, he can go alone and get his heart to melt before the Lord, and there he hath ease: Now it is like to go very ill with you, for you had better have wronged a hundred other men than those; If so be you have a Child that you know to be of a softly and tender spirit, that he will not be fighting presently, and one wrongs him,

him, upon which he comes with tears in his eyes, and makes his complaint to you; would it not ſtir up your ſpirit to right your Child, and the rather, becauſe you know your Child is of a ſoftly tender Diſpoſition? Certainly ſo it is with God, God will right them. I remember I have heard of a great woman in *Scotland*, that ſhe profeſt ſhe was more afraid of the Faſting and Prayer of *John Knox* and thoſe that followed him, than of an Army of an hundred thouſand Men. Be ever afraid to do thoſe Men and Women of tender ſpirits any hurt, for God hath a high eſteem of them.

And for you that are of tender ſpirits, O that you would take what hath been ſaid as your portion, and rejoyce in it; It may be God hath not given you much of this World, I but he hath given you a tender heart, and that is infinitely more; it may be you have weak memories, and weak abilities, you cannot do as others do, I, but hath not God given you a tender melting heart? that's more than all the parts in the World.

And it may comfort you againſt the weakneſs of your Graces, they are weak, but they are made up in this Tenderneſs. And it is a great queſtion, whether God doth more accept of one that is very eminent in all Graces and leſs in brokenneſs of heart, or more eminent in brokenneſs of heart, though very weak in other Graces: For though brokenneſs of heart is made up of other Graces, yet brokenneſs of heart may be very eminent where other Graces are but weak; becauſe, beſides the mixture of other Graces, there is the Spirit

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of God, and the Spirit of God may Actuate the Soul, and some particular Grace in the Soul. it may actuate it more than others; and so one that is weak otherwise may be eminent in this, and being eminent in this thou hast an excellency that is as excellent as others that are of greater Graces: So ——

Though perhaps thou art of such a temper that thou canst not hear profitably, nor obey the word as thou dost desire; but yet canst thou feel, hast thou Tenderness of Spirit: certainly there is Life in thee; so long as there is the sence of feeling there is Life.

Likewise comfort it may be to thee against all thy fears; thou feareſt God's wrath, hast thou a tender he rt, the Lord will be careful that thou shalt never know what much displeasure means: For thou hast sanctified the Name of God already and thou art sensible of the least manifestation of his Displeasure; O then surely thou shalt never have much manifestation of the displeasure of God to thee!

And be comforted in this, that *Jesus Christ's* sorrows are for thee, thou hast thy portion in the sorrows of *Jesus Christ*. Thou art of a mournful spirit thy self, but know, thou must not rest in the Tenderness of thy heart, but rather look up to Christ that was of a tender Spirit.

And the Tenderness that is in thy heart if it be true, thy Tenderness is but as the Oyl that came from *Aarons* Head down to his Garments, from Christ thy Head down to his Members, Christ was one of a very tender Spirit. And the tender-

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neſs that was in Chriſt it is thine; he was tender upon Earth, and he is as tender now, and will be at the day of Judgment of as tender a heart as ever, and in this thy Soul ſhould rejoyce and be comforted.

But O Lord, did I but know that thoſe comforts did belong to me, may not one apply them too ſoon and be preſumptuous?

I ſhall give thee but one Note that you may infallibly come to know whether theſe ſhall belong to thee or no.

Doth the hearing of theſe things and the applying of theſe things upon your hearts, do they make your hearts more tender; and mollifie your hearts the more towards God? Do you but find this, that upon the hearing of this you can have your hearts made more tender by it, and not go away more hardened? Do you find that upon this you can feel your hearts to be ſo affected as the more to be humbled, and the more to loath your ſelves, and to abhor your ſelves before the Lord, the more you hear that the Lord doth look upon you with an eye of acceptation? Certainly then it belongs to thee, it is thy portion, and thou mayeſt take it ſafely. I will give you a Scripture for this that ſo you may take in the comfort of it ſafely into your Souls: In *Ezek.* 36, the ſame place where the Lord promiſed a tender heart, *v.* 26. God promiſed to take away the ſtony heart, and to give an heart of Fleſh; now mark one ſpecial Fruit of this heart of Fleſh, after the Lord had made divers Gracious Promiſes to ſuch, that he would ſave them from all their uncleanneſs, and

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he would give them many mercies, now saith the Text *v.* 31. *Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight for your Iniquities, and for your Abominations*: why, can this then be applyed this very day, can it be said I heard such a Sermon of a tender heart opened to me, how pretious it was, and how God did accept of it, and then at that time did I feel my heart thus breaking; O I remember my evil ways against God, O that I should walk so unworthy of all these mercies from God, and so wretchedly before the Lord! I find my heart more broken by that my unworthy walking, than by any Argument that the Lord had applyed to me a long time before; canst thou say so, that at that time, at that Sermon it was so; why then peace be to thee, for it is all thy portion, and much good may it do thee: O go away and imbrace it, and make much of this thy Tenderness of Spirit, maintain it, if thou wouldest maintain thy comfort maintain thy tenderness of Spirit.

SERM.

SERMON IV.

June 30. 1644.

2 Kings 22. 19.

---Because thine heart was tender, &c.

TO let pass what formerly was delivered and to proceed.

Obj. I, but may some Soul say, this is the great thing that I find wanting in me, the want of a tender spirit; could I find my heart tender I could be comforted indeed, although I had many crosses, O but the hardness and insensibleness of my heart.

Answ. To that I answer thus: First, art thou sensible of thy hardness, then certainly there is some kind of tenderness; we cannot be sensible of hardness without Tenderness: dost thou account the want of tenderness to be one of the greatest evils that can come upon thee? many complain of hard times, O we have hard times saith this man, and the other man, O but I have a hard heart saith a poor Soul, and the hardness that is in my heart is a greater evil than all the hardness of the times; surely it is an argument that there is tenderness, in

in the heart that is so sensible of hardness; for you know where the Flesh by a disease is made Brawny and hard, it is not sensible at all, no not of its own hardness; but when once thou comest to be sensible of hardness, God hath begun to work Tenderness.

2. There is a two-fold hardness, there is the hardness of a Stone, and the hardness of Ice, God saith he will take away the heart of Stone: a stone you know, though the beams of the Sun shine never so hot upon it, it never yeilds upon that; but the Ice though it be very hard, yet when the warm beams of the Sun shine upon it the Ice melts, the Ice thaws; so though thy heart, thou feelest it hard for the present, I but when the beams of God's love at any time shine upon thy heart, when the beams of God's Grace manifested in the Gospel shine upon thee, how dost thou find thy heart working then? O then my heart doth begin to yield then my heart gives in unto God, that's a sign that it is not the hardness of a stone if the beams of God's love, and the Grace of God in the Gospel to thy soul can melt it; yea, if thou findest this in thy heart, that if God would but reveal his Grace to thee in his Son and shed abroad his love in thy heart, O thou thinkest thy heart would yield, and would go in and melt before him; I say, this is not the hardness of a stone, that is the hardness of heart which is so opposite to the Covenant of Grace. It is possible ones heart for the present may occasionally be hard, but yet if it be so, it will melt by the warm beams of the Sun: but it is the heart of stone that is so contrary to the Covenant of Grace.

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3. A third Answ. thou feel'st thy heart that thou canst not mourn for thy sin, for that is that thou meanest when thou sayst thy heart is so hard; but now I put this to thee, at the time when thou canst not mourn as thou dost desire, is not thy heart averse from sin, set against sin, and rather would choose (if it were put to thy choice) all the miseries in the World, than wilfully to commit any sin against God. And that not only because of the absolute necessity of it. But this comes from such a disposition in thy heart that is opposite to thy sin: Thou hast such an opposition unto sin as thou rather turnest from that, than from all other evils and afflictions in the World; now Peace be to thee if this be so, when thou thinkest that thy heart is so hard that thou canst not mourn for sin, yet there is comfort to thee notwithstanding thou canst not find that mourning thou dost desire, and that upon these two grounds.

First, it is an Argument of a great deal of Love to God, that though the Lord doth not make thee so sensible in regard of thy affections, of the bitterness of sin, and the evil of it, yet thy heart is strongly opposite to it. It is not such an Argument of Grace when the Lord fills the heart full with Anguish and sorrow and bitterness for sin, and then to have the heart turn from it. But for the heart to turn from the evil of sin, more than from the evil of any affliction, even at that time that it doth not feel so much of the bitterness of sin, nor of the displeasure of God for sin, I indeed, this argues much Grace.

Again, this is Comfort in the second place, because thou hast that which God doth most especially aim at in the making mens hearts sensible of sin, and to mourn for their sin: what doth God aim at in the mourning of men and womens hearts, but that thereby they might turn from their sin, and they might prize his mercy. God doth not delight to grieve the Children of men, he doth not so much care for your mourning, only so far as it may turn your hearts from sin, and cause you to prize his Grace: Now if thou art so sensible of the evil of thy sin, that it doth turn thy heart from it, and makes thee prize the Grace of God, then certainly thou hast that tenderness of heart the Scripture calls for, that which is the substance of it, and the main of it, that God doth accept of. If there be two men sick, one cries out of his pain, and he is in grievous dolour, and roars and shrieks out from the extremity of his pain, and sends to the Physitian, that he might come; there is another man is sick, and he is not in so great pain, he doth not roar and cry out so much as the other, but he doth so far apprehend the evil and the danger of his sickness, as he is willing to do all that possibly he can to send for the Physitian, and he is willing to part with all his Estate that he might have help: Now though he do not cry out so much as the other, yet if he be so sensible as he is willing to do any thing he can, and would prize his healing more than he would all his Estate, this man may come to be healed as soon as the other, and he may have the Physitian come to help as soon as the other: So, some the

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Lord makes so sensible of the Evil of their sin, as they lie under the weight of their sin, and lie and roar under it in a dreadful manner; and the most that these can do it is to make out after Christ, to seek to him above all things for help, to be willing to part with all for Christ; and you have another, though not in that extremity of sorrow, yet doth apprehend Christ, and he prizes Christ above all: Now I say, thou hast the tenderness of heart that God doth work in the Covenant of Grace in those that he hath a Love unto, and he doth intend to save everlastingly. Now therefore comfort thy self in what thou hast heard concerning the excellency of a tender Spirit: And seeing it is so precious, labour to maintain it, that is a third use: If God hath given thee any tenderness of Spirit, it is a Jewel, it is more than if he had made thee an Emperor, or a Queen, as the last day you heard, therefore maintain it in thy heart; O labour to maintain thy tenderness, for know, though the Lord doth work tenderness in our hearts, yet except we be careful we are in a great deal of danger to grow hard again: have you never had experience of this, have you never had your hearts yielding and melting before God for a time, and yet within a little time you have felt your hearts more hardened? certainly if you be acquainted with your own Hearts you will feel this, and therefore while you feel God working Tenderness, O labour to maintain this, and desire the Lord to preserve this in your hearts, O Lord keep this in the thoughts and purposes of my heart for ever,

Quest. You will say, how should we maintain a Tenderness in our Spirit?

Ans. First thus, search much into the riches of God's Grace in the Covenant, labour much to understand the glorious Riches of the Covenant of Grace; ther's nothing doth more work Tenderness, nor more preserve Tenderness than the Glorious mercy of God in *Jesus Christ*. Those Heart-Blood-Mercies of God in Christ, O those tender Bowels of God's Mercies and Compassions in Christ, they are those that do both work and preserve Tenderness of Heart; and the more any Man or Woman doth converse in the meditation of those Mercies, in labouring to dive into these Mercies, the more they will get Tenderness, and preserve the Tenderness of their Hearts.

2. O take heed of falling into any known sin; ther's nothing will harden the Heart more than the falling into any known sin, or any gross sin: the dayly incursions of sin in the Saints, they do not harden, but if they fall into any great sin, this doth usually exceedingly harden their hearts for a long time, and a great deal of doo there is to gain their Tenderness again. It was so with *David*, he fell into a great sin, and his heart was hardened for almost a whole year together, for three quarters of a year his heart was very much harduned: And he had not that Tenderness as before; *I said I would confess my sin*, he said he would do it, but he lay in his sin, and did not confess it to purpose untill *Nathan* came unto him, and that was three quarters of a year before *Nathan* came unto him, all which time he lay in his sin,

sin, and his heart was much hardned from the fear of God in his Soul, take heed of gross sins. We read of *Manna*, though the Beams of the Sun would melt it yet the Fire would Bake it and harden it; so the Heart of a Christian is like *Manna* in this, indeed the Beams of God's Grace in Christ, and the Mercies of the Covenant do melt the heart, therefore you should keep your hearts under those Beams: but the Fire of any Lust doth bake and harden the Heart, take heed of Gross sins, of falling into them.

And indeed that one Argument might be enough, one would think, to keep a Gracious Heart from the strength of Temptation. There comes such a Temptation for the commission of such a sin, it may be the sin would be very suitable to thy Flesh; well, some men perhaps have some Arguments against it, others have other Arguments: perhaps thou art struck with fear and horror, and thy Conscience would fly in thy face, if thou shouldest commit it, but a Gracious Heart methinks should have this very prevalent; if I should give way to this sin, I should loose my Tenderness, my Heart would be hardened by this means, and one that knows what the sweetness of Tenderness is, methinks should be loath to loose his Tenderness, for the gaining of the whole World; whatsoever becomes of me, let me keep my Tenderness saith a Gracious Heart.

3. Not only gross sins that a Christian may fall into, but Formality in Duty, that will harden thine Heart, thou wilt lose the Tenderness of thy Heart if thou groweſt to be formal in Duty,

it must be thy care therefore to maintain thy Communion with God in holy Duties, not to be satisfied in a Duty, except thou hast some Sun-shine of God's Face upon thee in the Duty; and on the other side, except thou findest thy heart working towards God in the Duty. When Men and Women perform Duties meerly in a formal way, out of slavery to Conscience, because Conscience puts them upon them, they must needs do them: now they may do them, but their Hearts will grow harder and harder, and in time they will leave them off. Such kind of People that have no other Principles to perform Duty, but meerly because they must do them, they will leave them of in time; But when a Heart finds that it was wont to enjoy Communion with God in Duty; Duties are such as I was wont to have sweet converce with God in them, and therefore I perform them; and I cannot be satisfied in the performance of any except I feel God coming in to my Soul; I, this is the Soul indeed that will keep a Tenderness of Heart, when Grace is kept in exercise then the Heart will keep Tender.

4. Another Rule for the keeping thy Heart Tender is this; Take heed of Heart-hardning Company, of Slight Company, of Frothy Company, the going into the Company of such as have slight and vain Spirits, and especially such as have been and are Professors of Religion, and yet have slight and vain Spirits, they do mightily harden the Heart; But now the keeping the Company of such as have broken Spirits, and tender hearts before the Lord, Is of a great deal of efficacy

cary to maintain the Tenderness of thy Heart. Many times when a Heart begins to be somewhat hardened, yet when by God's Providence thou comest into the Company of a soft broken-hearted Christian, whose Heart doth melt before the Lord, O it will set thy Heart a melting too, Company therefore with broken and melting-hearted Christians. In the Converse with Christians there is much power for the preserving of Tenderness of Spirit: to that end the Apostle Exhorts, *Heb.* 3. 12. *Take heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of unbelief, in departing from the Living God, but exhort one another dayly, while it is called to day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin: Exhort one another.* That is, get together into Converse with spiritual Christians that are lively and active, and stirring, *and Exhort one another*: why? Lest any of you be hardned through the deceitfulness of sin. When Christians are got together, and are conversing of the goodness of God in Christ, of the great mysteries of the Gospel, and of the work of God upon their Hearts; and every one telling of the work of God upon their Hearts, and the dealings of God with them, it is a marvelous help to keep the Heart in a Gracious Tenderness.

And other means might be named, as,

5. Take heed of Earthliness and Worldliness: of letting out thy Heart too much after Lawful things, it will harden thy Heart: though the things themselves be Lawful, yet if thou letteſt out thy Heart immoderately unto them, thou wilt in time grow earthly and stupid and senceless: as Earth

we know will quickly be hardened to a Stone, so when the Heart goes out to Earthly things though in themselves Lawful, thou wilt quickly lose the Tenderness of thy Heart: A Worldly Christian can never be a Tender-Hearted Christian. But this shall suffice for this Use.

Now seeing Tender-Heart is thus precious before the Lord, hence in the next place we have occasion to bewail, and that bitterly, the want of this Generally, not only among *Men*, but among *Christians*; O how little Tenderness of Spirit can the Lord find even among the Children of Men! O the hardness of Heart that is even come upon us! God's Name is fearfully dishonoured, his Law is wickedly violated, his Wrath is dreadfully revealed, his sore Displeasure with all severity is threatned, his Judgments they are Inflicted, and Ruine and Destruction is to be feared, and yet Mens Hearts are hardened yea the Bowels of Compassion of God are yearning, and Heart-Blood-Mercies of the Lord are Tendered, and most sweet Gracious Promises are revealed, and Heart-melting Promises and overcoming Goodness, that is manifested; yea the Grace of God is abundantly shed abroad in the World, and yet the Hearts of Men are hardened, the Hearts of Men are generally like unto the Hearts of that Creature that we read of *Job.* 41. about *v.* 24. the Text saith, *his Heart is as firm as a Stone, yea, as hard as a piece of the neither-Millstone*: truly the Hearts of most Men and Women are like the Heart of that Creature there spoken of, like unto the Smiths-Anvil, though we strike upon them again and again, yet never a whit

whit the softer but the harder: they be like the Smiths Dog that lies under the Anvil, though sparks fly about his Ears, yet he can lie and sleep securely: Thus it is with many, though the wrath of God be never so dreadfully revealed from Heaven, and the sparks even fly about their Ears, yet their Hearts are hardened before the Lord, so hardened as they cannot Repent, *Rom.* 2. 5. O wo, wo unto us, who have sinned against the Lord, but *more* wo unto us whose Hearts are hardened in our sin: Wher's the Spirit of *Elias*, the Spirit of *David*, the Spirit of *Hezekiah*, the Spirit of this *Josiah*? wher's the Spirit of *Jeremiah* and *Daniel* and other melting-Hearts, that we read of in Scripture they seem to be gone from the World, as if that Spirit had left the World. The Hearts of Men they are not only as Hearts of Iron, hard; but as Stones: There is difference between the hardness of Iron, and of Stone; Iron though it be very hard, yet if you put it into Fire it will yield, and you may have the Fire so hot as to melt it; But if you put the Stone into Fire it will never yield, but rather burst and fly in your face; and so many are not only as hard as Iron, but they are as Stone, that when they are put into the Fire, even then they yield not, but are ready to fly in the Face of God in a desperate manner when they are in the Fire, and rather will complain of God, and of the hardness of the ways of God, and of his severity, than of the wretchedness of their own Hearts. Ye shall see that the Hearts of Men are not only as Iron, but as Stone, yea worse than Stone; for we read that

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the Stones did cleave asunder at the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*: *Bonaventure* though a Papist, yet he hath a meditation upon this, and he cries out thus, Lord thou hast said that thou wilt take away the Heart of Stone, and give an Heart of Flesh; But Lord give me an Heart of Stone, that is, that I may be made sensible of the Glorious things of Christ; for I read that the Stones did cleave in sunder as if they were sensible of the Death and Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*; but I cannot be sensible when I hear and read of the Death and Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, therefore Lord give me an Heart of Stone: a great deal of hardness there is in the Hearts of Men, and this is a sore and a great evil. *Luther* hath such an expression: As, saith he, the contrite Heart is the Sacrifice that is so acceptable unto God, so the hard Heart is the Sacrifice that is so acceptable to the Devil. And that I might shew a little unto you the evil of a hard Heart, and some Convictions of it; the evil of the hardness of Heart

1. First is this, Certainly if thou hast a hard Heart, thou art a wicked Man, *Proverbs* 21. 29. *A wicked Man hardeneth his Face, but as for the Upright, he directeth his way*, so that the hardening of the Face thats but only an expression of the hardness there is in the Heart, which is opposed to the uprightness of man.

2. Yea and then Secondly, know that it is one of the most dreadful Judgments, that can be inflicted upon a Sinner in this World; for the Lord to give them up to a hard Heart, of all Judgments that are in the World, that

a Christian is capable of in this Life, this is one of the greatest, for the Lord to give him up to a hard Heart: As when God would manifest his wrath upon *Pharaoh*, the Text saith, he *hardened his Heart*, he gave him up to a hard Heart: and so in *Jo.* 12. 40. *Therefore they could not believe, because that* Isaias *said again, he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their Hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their Heart, and be converted, and I should heal them: These things said* Isaias, *when he saw his glory and spake of him.* This Place is quoted out of *Isa.* 6. and in the Gospel it is quoted two or three times, as a most dreadful Judgment of God upon sinners, for the Lord to give them up to hardness of Heart: It is a grievous misery to be sick of the Stone, O how dreadful are the shriekings of Men that have the Stone in the Bladder or Kidnies; But to have a Stone in the Heart it is a great deal worse than to have a Stone in thy Bladder; And if thou wert acquainted with the things of God, thou wouldst account it so, even a greater misery,——If the Stone were in the Bladder, and thou hadst all the Pain of it, if it might be but a means to soften thy Heart, thou wouldst rather rejoyce in it, and bless God for it; But this stoniness, hardness of Heart, it is the dreadfullest Judgment of God that can be upon a Man or Woman here, except they should be sent presently quick down to Hell; yea, it may prove to be a greater Judgment, for by this means thou mayst be heaping up wrath against the day of wrath: and that's the third thing of the evil of a hard

hard Heart: Those that have their Hearts hardened, all the course of their Lives, it is nothing but heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, *Rom.* 2. 4. Those Men and Women that live in the World with hard Hearts, they are continually Treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, O how dreadful will their condition be at the last:

4. Those whose Hearts are hardened, all the Word of God, and the Ordinances of God then do not prevail with them: whatsoever they hear, whatsoever is reveal'd to them. All the Heart-melting Mercies of God in the Gospel: all those Heart-breaking Truths that do discover the evil of sin, and the like, it doth them no good, but serves only to increase their sin, and Condemnation, if so be they continue in the hardness of their Hearts. And this is a sad condition for a Man or Woman to be in this Estate, that all those Heart-breaking Mercies of God in Christ, and Heart-breaking Truths that are revealed in the Word, and all those that God doth use to sanctifie for so much good to some, that those should serve for the agravation of my sin, and of my Condemnation. The Text tells us that all those that saw all the miracles of Christ in *Mat.* 6. 52. they considered them not, they wrought not upon them, because of the hardness of their Hearts: nothing works upon a hard Heart. You think now were Christ alive again upon the Face of the Earth, and did we see Christ work miracles, then our Hearts would be brought in; Nay, if thou hadst been alive among those *Jews*, and seen Christ and those miracles that he did; If thou hadst this

this Heart, they would never work upon thee; so that a hard Heart will stand out against all means of Grace whatsoever.

5. A Heart that is hard, it makes preparation to any kind of sin whatsoever, it is prepared I say for any sin. If thou beest kept from any sin it is only because thou hast not a fit Temptation. It is not out of Fear of God that thou art kept from it. If thy Heart be hard, thou art lyable to all Temptations, and to the grossest sins in the World. Thus you have it *Eph.* 4. 19. *who being past feeling, have given themselves over to Lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness*: mark how this is laid as the foundation of *Lasciviousness, who being past feeling*; it were Impossible, as if he should say, that they would be so greedy of their Lust, but that they are past feeling; But when a Man is past feeling, then he grows quickly (if Temptation comes) to be Lascivious, to work uncleanness, and that with all greediness, and this all because he is past feeling. ——And as it is a preparation to the greatest sin, so indeed, when men shall go on in great sins, it is a sign that they are past feeling, Wantons, unclean Persons, that go on in their sins. I say it is an Argument that they are past feeling.

6. Another evil of a hard Heart, is, that it maketh way to great misery, to great Afflictions, to great Judgments; whosoever thou art that hast a hard Heart, thou art upon the brink of some vile sin, or of some fearful Judgment: or it may be thou art upon the brink of both, this you have in *Prov.* 29. 1 and *Chap.* 28. 14. *happy*

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is the Man that feareth always, but he that hardens his Heart shall fall into mischief, and in *Chap.* 29. 1. *he that being often reproved, hardeneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy.* When thy Heart can give the rebound to God's Word, and to the Admonitions of thy Peace, and those that admonish thee, thou hardenest thy self against them! O tremble before the Lord, for the Lord saith here, thou shalt suddenly be destroyed, and there shall be no remedy.

7. And further know, that the Lord hath sworn the destruction of a hard-Hearted sinner, *Heb.* 3. 8. *Harden not your Hearts as in the Provocation in the day of Temptation in the Wilderness*: A special Aim of the Apostle it is to exhort them that their Hearts be not hardened; then he goes on in *v.* 11. *So I sware in my wrath, that they shall not enter into my Rest.* The Lord swares against a hard-Hearted Man: the Lord hath sworn thy destruction, if so be that thy Heart continues hard, thou art in such a condition as for ought thou knowest, thy Ruine and destruction is sworn by the Lord; O therefore take heed of continuing long so in the hardness of thy Heart, lest God's Oath comes out against thee particularly.

8. And farther know, that when thy time of Destruction comes, if thy Heart be hard, the Heart of God will be hardened against thee when thou comest to be under his stroke: As the Lord will be froward with those that walk frowardly according to the Scripture-Phrase, so the Heart of God is hardened against a hard Heart; thou hast a hard Heart, so that when God calls thee by his word

Word, when God reveals those Truths unto the that might even melt the Heart of a Devil, ye thy Heart is hardened; God calls upon thee to beware of such and such sins, and thy Heart is hardened: Well, is thy Heart hardened when thou comest to the Word of God? just it were with the Lord, if when thou shouldst be in the sorest Affliction, and shouldest be there crying to the Lord for mercy, that the Lord might harden his Heart against thee, and indeed he doth threaten to turn like for like to those that harden themselves against him: *Ezek.* 7, 12. They made their *Hearts as an Adamant Stone saith he, &c.* and *v.* 13. *Therefore it is come to pass that as he cryed and they would not hear, so they cryed and I would not hear:* they hardened their Hearts against me, and I hardened my Heart against them saith he: and Indeed when the Heart is hardened against the Word of the Lord, when he comes in his wrath, I say, he in just Judgment hardens his Heart against them. We have a suitable Scripture further for that in the Book of the *Lamentations c.* 3. 65. It is thus in your Books, *Give them sorrow of Heart, thy curse unto them:* the Word that is translated *sorrow of Heart,* is a word that signifies a *Covering,* give them *covering of Heart;* so *Arias Montanus* terms it, give them a covering of Heart, and so Interpreters upon the Place tell us, that this Word here sometimes signifies a *Disease* in the Body, a Disease upon the Heart, when there is a hard Film about the Heart that doth cover it, so as it keeps all kind of Cordials, or nourishment, or whatsoever should come to comfort the Heart, it keeps

keeps it from it; give them such a Disease in the Heart, and thy Curse with them. Those now that have that hardness of Heart as will keep off the Commands of God from them, and the Truths of God that they shall not work upon them; It is just with God to give them such a Covering upon their Hearts in the time of their affliction, as no Comfort shall come into them. You are in your Health and Prosperity, and you hear those Truths, that God expects your Hearts should melt and be sensible at, but you are not; well, when you come to your affliction, the Lord may send such a Curse, that thou mayest have that brawniness round about thy Heart, that whatsoever is said for thy Comfort, should never reach thy Heart: As whatsoever is said now for thy contrition doth never reach thy Heart? And is this any other but Justice, O this would be a fearful Curse of God upon Men, if it should be so!

Ye know farther, that God hath a time to make Men sensible in spite of their Hearts, one way or other they shall have their Hearts brought to some kind of Tenderness, so as to be sensible of the evil of sin, and of the greatness of that God they have to deal withal. There is a two-fold kind of Tenderness;

That which comes from a right Temper of the Flesh, and that which comes from the soreness of the Flesh. The Saints of God have a sensibleness, but their sensibleness is the sensibleness of a right Temper of their Hearts, and that doth them no hurt at all; they are sensible of God's threats, and sensible of the Promises, but there is a joy in their sensible-

sensibleness But wicked men that are not now sensible, the Lord hath a time that he will make them sensible; the Lord will make their Hearts sore, and then they shall be sensible: *Ezek.* 21. 7. *And it shall be when they say unto thee wherefore sighest thou, that thou shalt answer for the tidings, because it cometh: and every Heart shall melt, and all Hands shall be feeble, and every Spirit shall faint, and all Knees shall be weak as Water, behold it cometh, and shall be brought to pass saith the Lord God. Every Heart shall melt.* We here in my Text have an example of a Gracious melting-Heart that God accepts, but if your Hearts do not melt by the Word, God will melt your Hearts hereafter by some dreadful tidings of some fearful Judgments of his: and so you have it *Jer.* 9. 7, 8. *Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, behold I will melt them and try them, for how shall I do for the Daughter of my People.* If so be when you hear the Word, your Hearts do not melt, the Lord hath a time in spite of your Hearts to melt you. And therefore to conclude this, in shewing the Evil of a hard Heart, with that Text that we have in *Job* 9. 5. *who hath hardened his Heart against him and hath prospered?* So I say to every Man or Woman that hath a hard Heart, *who hath hardened his Heart against the Lord and hath prospered?* Thou mayest go on, and please thy self in thine own ways, and think that thou wilt have thy will, and you will do thus and thus; let them say what they can, but know, there was never any that hardened his Heart against the Lord that hath prospered. What's become of all hard Hearted-Sinners that have ever liv'd in former

times? Give me any one example of any Man that ever hath hardened his Heart against the Lord and hath prospered, but ruine and misery and eternal Destruction is the end of him.

But you will say, I hope we have no hard Hearts, we do acknowledge that it is a fearful Judgment to have a Heart hardened against the Lord.

No; are not your Hearts hardened against the Lord? then O how is it that you are so quiet in your sin! Certainly that Man or Woman hath a hard Heart that can be so quiet in any way of known sin: Thou art Conscious to thy self of such and such sins as thou livest in, and yet thou canst eat and drink, and go into Company and be merry, O hard Hearted-sinner that art hardened in thy sin! If thy Heart were Tender, if so be thou hast fallen into any sin, as its true, we are all sinners, that must be acknowledged; But certainly, it would be as a Moat in thy Eye: there may be a great deal of dirt upon ones hand and that may not trouble one, but a little Mote in ones Eye that will trouble one very much.

Again, Men have hard Hearts or otherwise the Word of God, and the works of God would gain their Hearts unto the Lord, but it doth not. We see at this day those blessed Truths of God that are revealed more clearly and fully than ever they were since the World began, and yet they gain but very few Men, and the great works of God wherein God appears the most Glorious, yet they do not gain Mens Hearts; surely their Hearts are very hard.

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3. Surely Mens Hearts are hard, because their Hearts are Proud: A proud Heart is always a hard Heart; so much Pride as there is, certainly so much hardness there is in the Heart; *Dan.* 5. 20. *But when his Heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in Pride*: proud Men and stout Men that are set upon their wills, such Men as are wilful in their ways, and proud and stout, they are Men and Women of hard Hearts.

Again, surely the Hearts of Men are mighty hard: It appears in this, in that they can so easily come into God's presence, and confess their sin before God, and judge themselves worthy to be destroyed for their sin; and yet they can go away and live in their sin after all this; her's most dreadful hardness of Heart: and how ordinary is this at this time! We have many days of Fasting and Prayer, and there we come and tell God as it were stories of our sin, we make confession of our sin at large, and when we have confest such and such sins that we are guilty of, we judge our selves for our sins, and yet after all this, what sins are amended? Let any Family come in and say, O Lord, since these fasting days such and such sins have been confest, and we have judged our selves for them, and through thy Grace they have been amended. I am afraid but few Souls can be able to say thus, as in the presence of God: Certainly in the day of a Fast, either you do thus or you do not. If the Minister do meet with you, then you joyn with him and say *Amen* to his Confessions. If the Minister do not meet with your particular sins, then if you have a Heart to practise a

Fast to God as you ought, you will get alone in private and confess those sins that were not confest in publick. I appeal to you as from the Lord, have you kept such Fasts? have you observed in the Ministers Prayer whether he hath met with your particular sins or not? and if he have not, have you gone alone, and examined your Hearts in private what sins you are guilty of? have you been judging your selves for them, and yet not reformed them? Certainly if you have not done this, you have not known what it is to keep a Fast; and if you have done thus and continue still in the same sin, this notes fearful hardness of Heart! what to come into God's presence, and open our sins, and yet not to set our selves with all our might against them; surely our Hearts are very much hardened before the Lord.

Again, the very mercy of God hardens Men; the more Men have the shine of God's Mercy the more they are hardened in their sin. You have many that in times of their Affliction, they are like to Iron that seems to be yieldable, but let their Afflictions be over, and then they are as hard as before, their Hearts are like Clay that the Beams of the Sun doth harden them.

Yea, certainly its a sign we have hard Hearts in that we are no more sensible of the miseries of our Brethren in other parts, they cry to us for help, we hear of their doleful complaints and cries, they are spoyld of their Goods, their Wives ravished before their eyes, and they cast out of all; and yet little Bowels of mercy towards others: because our tables are full, and we lie soft and at ease,

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we take not unto Heart the miseries of our Brethren, neither the publick calamities of the Church. I dare appeal to this great Congregation, to every particular Soul, how far hast thou taken to Heart the publick affairs of the Church at this time. We know that the Church of God doth suffer much, now do these things go to thy Heart? canst thou get alone & bewail in the sorrow of thy Spirit, and thy Heart melt and dissolve into Tears when thou heares't of the miseries of thy Brethren, and the publick calamities of the Church? But now when these things do not touch thee, and thou art not sensible at all of them, but thou canst go on and be merry, and follow the World; and because there is nothing upon thy skin for the present, therefore thou art sensible of the miseries of no other. Surely thou art a hard-Hearted Man or Woman, and therefore tremble before the Lord.

And thou that art thus, all the Comfort that was said concerning a Tender-Heart the last day, it is to be feared that thou hast no Lot nor Portion in that business.

But it may be that some of you may say, I bless God that my Heart is not thus hard, I find a sensibleness in my Heart of these things.

I, but this may be far from the sensibleness of Spirit that was here in *Josiah*, and therefore that should have been the next Use of Examination; whether our Hearts be Tender in a Spiritual way? that is a work of the Holy-Ghost sanctifying our Hearts.

We are to know first, there may be a softness of Heart that may come from softness of Nature.

There may be some flashy workings of Heart by hearing of the Word.

And there may be some sensibleness of the Heart by the knowledg of the Law.

As for the First, A Plum, or a Cherry may be soft without, but hard within.

And so Secondly, we know that Ice may be Thaw'd in the day, and Froze again in the Night.

And Thirdly, for the terrors of the Law, we know that the Marble-Stone in wet Weather may melt as it were, and seem to trickle down with Tears, but a stone still.

FINIS.

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